

## **DOCTORAL THESIS**

### **Constructing bilingualism in the Maltese therapeutic context: a Foucauldian Discourse Analysis**

Bonaria, Michela Galea

*Award date:*  
2017

#### **General rights**

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal ?

#### **Take down policy**

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

**Constructing bilingualism in the Maltese therapeutic context: a Foucauldian Discourse**

**Analysis.**

**by**

**Michela Galea Bonavia B.Psy (Hons)**

*A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of PsychD in*

*Counselling Psychology*

**Department of Psychology**

**University of Roehampton**

**2017**

The research for this project was submitted for ethics consideration under the reference PSY14/135 in the Department of Psychology and was approved under the procedures of the University of Roehampton's Ethics Committee in July 2014.

## Abstract

To date, there is a dearth of studies addressing therapeutic uses of bilingualism as applied to counselling psychology in postcolonial contexts. This study explored some of the ways in which Maltese therapeutic practitioners<sup>1</sup> understood and worked with bilingualism. Nine semi-structured interviews were conducted with accredited therapeutic practitioners. Taking a poststructural epistemological approach, a Foucauldian informed discourse analysis was applied to the data produced. In the analysis, three key discourses were identified: professional, cultural, and deviant that produced bilingualism as a power-laden discursive site of therapeutic ideas and practices. Further examination of how these discourses resourced discursive constructions of Maltese-English bilingualism highlighted how these firstly positioned uses of English and Maltese as serving different therapeutic functions, with participants understanding counselling ideas in English while cultural experiences were best expressed in Maltese. Secondly, some of the postcolonial resonances that privilege English over Maltese were illustrated as still evident in these accounts through the construction of English as sophisticated and Maltese as crude. Finally, code-switching was variously objectified as both facilitative and frustrating in enabling therapeutic communication and maintaining the therapeutic relationship. This analysis therefore contributes to an alternative understanding of bilingualism in Maltese therapeutic practice by highlighting the social, cultural and historical processes that have shaped these discursive constructions. This may inform Maltese practitioners in developing their critical reflexivity regarding the power implications of using Maltese and English, and may also be useful to the wider therapeutic community, including counselling psychologists, working in other bilingual contexts.

---

<sup>1</sup> N.B. The term “therapeutic practitioners” is used to refer to participants throughout this thesis.

## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	2
List of tables.....	7
List of transcription conventions .....	8
Acknowledgements.....	9
 <b>Chapter One: Introduction .....</b>	 <b>10</b>
1.1 Introduction to Chapter One.....	10
1.2 The problem of bilingualism: a rationale for this study .....	12
1.2.1 Counselling psychology and bilingualism.....	19
1.3 Poststructuralism and Foucauldian discourse analysis: An epistemological stance .....	23
1.3.1 Poststructuralism: an outline. ....	24
1.3.2 The Foucauldian gaze.....	25
1.3.3 Power/knowledge and bilingualism.....	29
1.4 The potential contributions to counselling psychology.....	31
1.5 Summary and conclusion .....	33
 <b>Chapter Two: Mapping bilingualism within the Maltese context and therapeutic practice: a genealogically-informed, critical literature review .....</b>	 <b>35</b>
2.1 Introduction to Chapter Two .....	35
2.2 A historical outline of bilingualism in Malta .....	37
2.2.1 Bilingualism in Malta: 1090 C.E. - 1560 C.E. ....	38
2.2.2 Bilingualism in Malta: 1560-1800.....	39
2.2.3 Bilingualism in Malta: the British colonial gaze (1800-1964)..	40
2.2.4 Bilingualism in Malta: the current situation.....	45
2.2.5 Summary of these historical understandings. ....	45
2.3 Psychological understandings of bilingualism within therapeutic practice .....	46
2.3.1 The psycholinguistic and neurolinguistic perspective.....	47
2.3.2 The psychological therapies: the psychodynamic perspective. ....	49
2.3.2.1 Code-switching as a defence against emotions. ....	50
2.3.2.2. Code-switching and the facilitation of the self.....	53
2.3.3 Cognitive behavioural therapy.....	55
2.3.4 Humanistic perspectives.....	56
2.3.5 Systemic therapy.....	58
2.3.6 Psychological assessments and tests.....	59
2.3.7 Supervision. ....	60

2.4 Sociohistorical and sociocultural perspectives.....	61
2.4.1 Postcolonialism, bilingualism and counselling psychology. ....	62
2.4.2 Bilingual practices in Malta: implications for therapeutic practice.....	64
2.5 Chapter Overview .....	68
 <b>Chapter Three: Methodology and Method .....</b>	<b>71</b>
3.1 Introduction to Chapter Three .....	71
3.2 The epistemological position of Foucauldian discourse analysis in psychology .....	71
3.3 Method and Research design.....	75
3.3.1 Ethical issues addressed.....	76
3.3.2 Participants: recruitment and inclusion criteria. ....	77
3.3.3 Key demographics of participants recruited.....	78
3.3.4 Procedure for conducting interviews.....	79
3.3.4.1 Pilot interview .....	81
3.3.4.2 Interview schedule.....	81
3.3.4.3 Interview transcription .....	81
3.4 Data analysis – analytic steps applied .....	81
3.5 Researcher reflexivity .....	84
3.6 Quality in qualitative research.....	87
 <b>Chapter Four: Analysis and Discussion.....</b>	<b>90</b>
4.1 Introduction to Chapter Four.....	90
4.2 English: a professional discourse .....	92
4.2.1 English as the language of professional psychology. ....	93
4.2.2 English as offering emotional precision. ....	100
4.3 Maltese: a cultural discourse .....	103
4.3.1 Maltese as enabling intimacy. ....	103
4.3.2 Maltese as a denigrated language. ....	108
4.4 Maltese-English bilingualism: a discourse of deviance .....	111
4.4.1 Translation across Maltese and English as therapeutically disruptive. ....	111
4.4.2 Code-switching as fostering inequality. ....	113

4.4.3 Code-switching as a resource. ....	116
4.5 Chapter summary .....	125
 <b>Chapter Five: A critical discussion of the research findings .....</b>	<b>130</b>
5.1 Introduction to Chapter Five .....	130
5.2 Research findings and possible contributions to counselling psychology .....	131
5.3 Evaluating the study.....	140
5.3.1 A critique of the methodology.....	142
5.3.2 A critique of the participant sample. ....	144
5.3.3 Reflexivity revisited. ....	146
5.4 Further research.....	147
5.5 Overall conclusions .....	148
 <b>References.....</b>	<b>150</b>

## **Appendices**

Appendix A- Letter of invitation .....	179
Appendix B- Participant consent form .....	180
Appendix C- Participant debrief form .....	182
Appendix D- Interview schedule .....	183
Appendix E- Interview transcript .....	185
Appendix F- An example of the initial analysis of data identifying constructions of Maltese .....	209



## **List of tables**

Table 1: A summary of participant information.....	79
Table 2: A summary of discourses and constituent discursive constructions outlined.....	92

## **List of transcription conventions**

[...] indicates where material is deliberately omitted.

(text) brackets surround words for speech clarification.

(*text*) brackets with italicized words indicate where, for example, there is laughter.

[text] indicates a clarification of relevant information.

(.) indicates a short pause.

(Malson 1998; xv)

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to start off by thanking Dr. Jean O’Callaghan, my Director of Studies, and Dr. Paul Dickerson, my supervisor, for their invaluable support, knowledge and guidance.

This thesis would not have been possible without the generosity shown by the participants in sharing their experiences. I would also like to thank the Malta Chamber of Psychologists and Malta Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists for their kind help in recruiting.

My gratitude to my father Charles and sister Francesca knows no bounds. Your constant love and encouragement kept me going throughout this process.

Finally, I thank my friends near and far, for the support and care they have shown me. I am blessed that you are so plentiful and loving.

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my mother Helene and brother Christopher.

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

#### **1.1 Introduction to Chapter One**

This study is concerned with the therapeutic uses of bilingualism within the Maltese context, particularly considering the legacy of postcolonial influences that may still be evident in contemporary practices. Traditional views of bilingualism within psychological knowledge, such as psycholinguistics, allow for particular ways of conceptualising the use of more than one language in therapy. Most notably, these create a view of bilingualism as rooted in cognitive processes taking place within the brain. However, these established forms of knowledge do not seem to attend to the possible influences of sociohistorical or sociocultural understandings of bilingualism. It is argued that if ignored, the power dynamics implicated in the uses of different languages in therapy could perpetuate historical inequalities, often beyond the individual practitioner's awareness that may have relevance for counselling psychologists who work bilingually in several contexts.

Specifically, this qualitative study aims to explore the accounts of therapeutic practitioners working in Malta, focusing on their understandings of their uses of Maltese and English in their work with clients. Furthermore, the proposed analysis aims to interrogate and make visible the discursive power relations particularly relating to sociohistorical, colonial, and cultural influences in their contemporary practices. It is argued that this analysis thereby offers an alternative conceptualization of psychological knowledge regarding bilingualism within the Maltese therapeutic context. It also makes a wider contribution to counselling psychology in relation to professional reflexivity concerning sociocultural and sociohistorical influences. This thesis is therefore guided by the following research question: How do therapeutic practitioners in Malta construct the bilingual use of Maltese and English within

their therapeutic work? In order to answer this question, Foucault's writings on discourse and power/knowledge were employed. As Schirato, Danaher and Webb (2012) argue, his ideas are particularly useful for academic fields such as psychology as they address the relationship between power, social institutions and the regulation of groups. A Foucauldian discourse analysis (FDA) is therefore proposed as a suitable means to address this research question.

Although Foucault's theoretical work is informed by both structuralist and poststructuralist epistemologies (Couzens-Hoy, 1988), the epistemological position of this thesis sustains a poststructuralist and social constructionist stance. This means that knowledge, truth, and meaning are seen as created through the use of language and that language as discourse is opaque and power-laden (Gergen, 2001; Burr, 2003). Foucault's (1980) ideas regarding knowledge and power will hence be used to interrogate the systems of domination that may be perpetuated through discourses about bilingualism and therapy within the Maltese postcolonial setting. As Stahl (2004) proposes, a Foucauldian approach to research implies that the way in which these discourses are structured, what they name, objectify, allow or disallow, as well as their historical constitution are of great importance and will be taken into consideration throughout this study. This thesis, therefore, aims to question how current forms of power are sustained through diverse expert forms of knowledge regarding bilingualism (Foucault, 1982) circulating within therapeutic practitioners' talk about their work. The possible implications these may have on the way in which therapy is conducted, either by joining or contesting the circulating contemporary norms, will also be discussed.

In this chapter, I firstly argue for the relevance of the research question to counselling psychology. Secondly, I provide a rationale for this study by giving an overview of how bilingualism as a category has been socially and historically defined in various contexts and

why a poststructuralist understanding is necessary for counselling psychologists to consider. Thirdly, I outline the relevance of Foucault's work on discourse and power in order to argue their applicability to this thesis. I conclude this chapter by discussing the potential contributions of this study to counselling psychology.

## **1.2 The problem of bilingualism: a rationale for this study**

In this chapter, I provide a reading of how the therapeutic construction of bilingualism may be problematized and variously understood within counselling psychology in order to provide a rationale for this thesis. It has been suggested that understandings of bilingualism are rendered subject to change (Heller, 2007) according to the context in which they are produced (Garrett, 2007). Accordingly, this section starts with a brief overview of the development of the term "bilingualism", how it is variously maintained by professional understandings while considering its sociohistorical constitution and its status within postcolonial countries, specifically, within the Maltese context.

It is understood that the literature that informs bilingualism such as "psychological, cognitive, psycholinguistic, social psychological, social, sociolinguistic, sociolinguistic, sociocultural and linguistic" (p. 6; Blanc & Hamers, 2000) produces various forms of evidence that are also thought to inform counselling psychology practice (Barkham & Mellor-Clark, 2003). Furthermore, the varying forms of knowledge produced may reflect competing relationships between institutions, groups, and individuals surrounding issues related to citizenship, language and governance (Stroud, 2007). Bilingualism may, therefore, be tied up in power relations perpetuated by these varying understandings which may resource therapeutic considerations of bilingualism. The discursive analytic approach used by this study aims to critically highlight the various benefits and limitations of these considerations of bilingualism. It may be of potential interest to counselling psychologists,

and other therapeutic practitioners, to consider the ensuing power relations of these conceptualisations as they may be replayed within therapeutic practice.

Current pervasive understandings of bilingualism as anomalous may be traced back to historically fashioned ideas of language as a tool that demarcates the nation or state and identifies subjects; an ideology that both Hobsbawm (1996) and Heller (2007) link to reunification movements occurring in Europe in the 19th century. Under such political and social movements, Pujolar (2007) argues that bilingualism began to be perceived as defying the construct of the monolingual subject perpetuated by nationalist ideologies that sought to promote a cohesive national identity as reflected in the “one language/ one culture/ one nation paradigm” (p. 71). Bilingualism has been historically regarded as disruptive to this ideal thus rendering it a deviant practice under dominant, monolingual ideology (Auer, 2007; Bailey, 2007).

This view of bilingualism as irregular has also been perpetuated through current understandings of practices related to bilingualism such as code-switching. The term “code-switching” is often used to reflect the shift from one linguistic code to another within one unit of speech i.e. from Maltese to English or from English to Maltese (Macswain, 2007). Bailey (2007) suggests that code-switching is often considered an aberration of monolingual ideology that promotes language as a tool for communication as it is seen as muddying language’s communicative purpose through the mixing of different languages. Through such a lens, code-switching is seen solely as an activity that requires the use of separate linguistic codes thereby potentially precluding other possible understandings (Heller, 2007) as illustrated in the Maltese context.

Malta’s bilingual situation is presented as a historically persistent situation (Vella, 2003). Currently, both Maltese and English occupy official language status making it possible to

conceptualise bilingualism in Malta as occurring on both societal and individual levels (Edwards, 2007). It is, however, possible to question the categorisation of English and Maltese as separate and distinct categories. Vella (2013) argues that due to the code-switching most people engage in, it may be more helpful to think of language in Malta as lying along a continuum:

  
 Dialectical Maltese      Standard Maltese      Mixed Maltese/English      Maltese English

This pluralistic view of languages allows for co-existence rather than a superior/inferior positioning of Maltese and English (Camilleri Grima, Buttigieg, Xerri, 2013) while also allowing for a view of code-switching as a language in its own right (Bailey, 2007). The dichotomous construction of Maltese and English, however, may reflect underlying ideologies which may be replayed within therapy and which are of particular interest to this study.

Furthermore, I propose that contemporary notions of bilingualism as a troublesome practice may implicate counselling psychology in understandings of bilingualism as constraining therapeutic work. This may be demonstrated through psychological literature; for example Kokoliari and Catanzarite (2011) argue for increased psychological knowledge on bilingualism based on an understanding that different languages within the therapeutic room may add a layer of difficulty to therapy. Additionally, I argue that the confluent understanding of code-switching maybe limited in its scope as related to therapeutic practice. As Mondada (2007) suggests, an alternative understanding of code-switching as occurring interactionally allows it to be understood as strategic and context dependent. Moreover, Bailey (2007) proposes heteroglossia (Bakhtin, 1981) as a concept that allows for an understanding of the concurrent use of linguistic codes as practices with local and social



meanings. A greater understanding of circulating conceptualisations of Maltese and English and the interactions between both may be needed particularly as they are understood to be used within the Maltese, therapeutic and postcolonial context.

The impact of colonialism's system of oppression may continue to resonate within various postcolonial contexts. As Wetherell and Potter (1992) argue, racial discourse within New Zealand acknowledges Maori culture yet weakens any claims to actual reform and economic gains they may have. This seemingly facilitative yet oppressive situation may also resonate within discursive understandings of the various languages present within different postcolonial contexts. As Crystal (2007) argues, colonialism's impact within the linguistic sphere resulted in a view of native languages as inferior, "rudimentary or animal-like" (p. 55). Bilingualism has been promoted as a compromise between historically dominant and dominated languages by allowing for the existence of both. However, this understanding does not acknowledge the potential power dynamics between languages that may continue to resonate in spite of the dismantling of colonial rule. As Stroud (2007) argues, it may, therefore, be considered pertinent to critically outline how colonial and postcolonial processes have resulted in a regulation of practices and ideas about bilingualism.

Postcolonialism is concerned with the study and critique of the aftermath of colonisation i.e. the cultural and social legacies left behind (Said, 1978; Spivak, 1983) and their implications for contemporary psychological life. The contextual location of languages points to a need to understand what sociocultural and sociohistorical processes (Hook & Truscott, 2013; Prilleltensky, 2012; Persram, 2013) may still be evident in contemporary therapeutic talk in Malta. Examples from Ireland (Moane, 1994) where the attempted erasure of Irish was a sign of colonial control, and Ghana (Edu-Bandoh & Otchere, 2012), where English acts as a lingua franca and local languages may be sites of resistance, illustrate the

need to consider how differences in colonial exploitation are diversely manifested through language in different locations. I, therefore, propose that each colonial context has perpetuated particular narratives (Thomas, 2013) about language that may need to be understood. As Allwood and Berry (2008) argue each postcolonial context may therefore require its own psychological knowledge. Hence, it is argued that the Maltese postcolonial context requires its own understanding of bilingualism within therapeutic practice; a contribution this thesis hopes to make.

Moreover, colonialism has been described by Marsella (2012) as a precursor to globalisation with Huygens (2009) arguing that globalisation itself is a form of contemporary colonisation. Crystal (1997) partially attributes the global role English occupies today to the historically enforced dominance of English within colonial contexts thus linking language, colonisation, and globalisation together. The need for counselling psychologists to understand globalising processes as related to bilingualism may be apparent in arguments made by various authors (see Santiago-Rivera, 1995; Nguyen, 2013; Costa & Dewaele, 2014 and Byford, 2015). These encourage therapeutic practitioners to reflect on bilingualism in their practice as a result of increasing rates of migration, and hence of linguistically diverse clients, within Western society. As this thesis is concerned with the uses of English and Maltese, I further argue that current understandings of the use of English within the postcolonial world may also reflect the “global language” (Crystal, 1997, p. 1) status English is perceived as occupying within post-national ideology (Pujolar, 2007) thereby also reflecting a global discourse that may be of interest to counselling psychologists working within a variety of geographical locations. Furthermore, this study may also contribute to counselling psychology’s growing interest in international perspectives (James, 2016) through its focus on therapeutic work in Malta but also by shedding light on the globalising potential of English within counselling psychology.

When further considering the Maltese context, the influence of educational fluency in English, due to historical associations with Britain, is thought to be a significant factor leading Maltese students to choose to study psychological or psychotherapeutic skills in the United Kingdom or the United States of America (Abela, Frosh & Dowling, 2005). Current information indicates that language is also constructed as central to psychological training in Malta. Entry onto the Masters in counselling psychology lists a proficient level in Maltese as a requirement (University of Malta, 2015) thus placing Maltese at the forefront of competencies considered important for the training of effective counselling psychologists. Most of the lecturers in the Department are described as having started off their studies at the University of Malta but followed postgraduate or doctoral studies overseas (University of Malta, 2015) thus indicating that the knowledge they acquired may not have been tailored to the Maltese context. The relationship between bilingualism and educational practices may, therefore, have implications for therapeutic training courses in Malta that may need to be understood.

Consequently, I propose that the relationship between bilingualism and postcolonial discourse within therapeutic practice in Malta may potentially be influential. As Allwood and Berry (2006) argue one effect of psychologists training abroad is the unquestioned importation of Western modes of thought that may not be fully suitable to varying cultural contexts. Furthermore, local languages such as Maltese may lack terms that adequately reflect psychological concepts (Cornforth, 2001) and English may be used as a default language potentially creating inequalities between the two languages. It may, therefore, be argued that therapeutic practices in Malta are caught up in power relations that demonstrate how constructions of bilingualism within the Maltese context are potentially complex and problematic.

As may be concluded, current conceptualisations of bilingualism may be understood as caught up in relations of power (Tabouret-Keller, 2007). As a result, non-traditional and alternative accounts of bilingualism may be occulted. Applying a Foucauldian gaze may, therefore, aid in shedding light on the discursive power relations that have led to contemporary legitimised accounts of Maltese and English and how they are deployed by therapeutic practitioners within therapy. As Heller (2007) argues, this will also allow for a conceptualisation of how institutional practices may be implicated in the maintenance of current relations of power. This may aid practitioners to reflexively critique their current understandings of bilingualism within their therapeutic work.

In addition, a social constructionist account as proposed by this study may allow dominant monolingual ideology surrounding bilingualism and how it resonates in therapy to be challenged. As Heller (2007) proposes, this may clarify how ideology is used as a discursive resource by different subjects, in different social and historical situations, to constrain or make possible, conventions utilised to govern the bilingual subject. Furthermore, I argue that this study privileges a view of bilingualism as being both constructed by and as constructing the social context (Young & Astarita, 2013). This view suggests that language plays a part in creating, reproducing, and resisting social realities such as social class, gender, and ethnicity thereby highlighting how the specificity of contexts leads to different constructions of bilingualism. In conclusion, this study does not aim to define and prescribe uses of Maltese and English in therapy but seeks to understand how such categories have been constructed, what purpose they serve, and how they are implicated in the creation of the Maltese-English bilingual speaker (Garrett, 2007; Burck, 2011) in therapeutic practice.

### **1.2.1 Counselling psychology and bilingualism.**

This section briefly outlines the importance of considering counselling psychology's relationship to bilingualism. Counselling psychology is considered to be a relatively recent profession. Its emergence is believed to be a reaction to traditional forms of psychological knowledge thus enabling it to occupy its own position within the broader field of psychological inquiry and knowledge (Strawbridge & Woolfe, 2010). Counselling psychology is currently conceptualised as maintaining a humanistic epistemology while incorporating other theoretical schools such as psychodynamic, phenomenological, and cognitive-behavioural as well as constructionist approaches, into the psychological and therapeutic activities it promotes.

As a result, counselling psychology may be described as a profession that does not elevate one approach above all others but acknowledges the various contributions of different traditions that aid in the understanding of the subjective experience of the individual and their meaning-making process (Rizq, 2010). The focus on the formation of meaning makes an appreciation of bilingualism within therapeutic practice especially significant. Pavlenko (2006) suggests that bilinguals may create different meanings around the language they speak and deploy each language accordingly thereby rendering an understanding of bilingualism central to counselling psychology practice.

Another important feature of counselling psychology is the emphasis it places on the therapeutic relationship with specific focus placed on developing it, understanding its dynamics and using it to reach therapeutic aims (Strawbridge & Woolfe, 2010). The link between language and the therapeutic relationship is thereby considered crucial (Kokoliari & Catanzarite, 2011) for practitioners to consider. Language is emphasized as deeply important with Seay Clauss (1998) describing it as "profoundly relevant" (p. 188) while Ramos-

Sanchez (2007) calls it “salient” (p.154) to therapy. Bilingualism has traditionally been seen as hindering understanding due to its potential mixing of two separate linguistic systems (Bailey, 2007; Byford, 2015) thus making an understanding of how it may impact the therapeutic relationship particularly important for counselling psychologists to consider.

Psychology’s difficulty reconciling bilingualism to therapeutic practice may be exemplified in the following research findings. When considering monolingual therapists working with bilingual clients, specific linguistic differences have been identified by therapists and are often presented as impacting the therapeutic relationship. Such issues include: difficulty explaining non-verbals related to particular languages, such as tone, pitch and gesture (Santiago-Rivera, Altarriba, Poll, Gonzalez-Miller,& Cragun, 2009); emotional distance due to perceived linguistic difference, envy at linguistic proficiency (Bowker & Richards, 2004) as well as anxiety, shame and powerlessness (Stevens & Holland , 2008).

Counselling psychology places great emphasis on the collaborative nature of therapeutic practice. Practitioners are thereby exhorted to minimise the power differential within the therapeutic relationship by increasing the client’s capacity to overcome obstacles to their well-being (Stanley, 2013). From the bilingual clients’ perspective, however, feelings of linguistic incompetence may result in extra focus placed on producing grammatically correct sentences (Imberti, 2007; Ramos-Sánchez, 2007); a process seen as inhibiting emotional expression. Moreover, Stevens and Holland (2008) highlight how accent and slower linguistic pace may lead to stereotyping of the client and loss of psychological contact. Such examples demonstrate how considerations of bilingualism within therapy present the relationship as threatened thereby highlighting the necessity of finding ways to enable bilingual clients to express themselves satisfactorily during therapy (Santiago-Rivera & Altarriba, 2002).

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) (2016) outlines the following recommendation (Standard 2.4) when dealing with linguistic difference: “You must make sure that, where possible, arrangements are made to meet service users’ and carers’ language and communication needs.” The British Psychological Society (BPS) (2009) further includes respect for individual linguistic differences as an ethical obligation (Standard 1.1) for psychologists to observe thereby highlighting how language may be implicated in an unequal therapeutic relationship between client and professional. These standards, however, do not offer particular suggestions on how to meet these needs. As a result, it may be argued that although counselling psychologists are expected to respect linguistic diversity they are given little guidance in how to consider bilingualism within their therapeutic work.

Several authors (see Ivers, Ivers, & Duffey, 2013; Netto, 2006 and Pattison, Rowland, Richards, et al., 2009) fill this gap by proposing the setting up of multilingual services as an efficient means to reach a wide array of clients with different linguistic capabilities. Rozensky and Gomez (1983) state that having to use a language different to the one in which an experience is cognitively represented may be experienced as confusing for the client and thus impedes therapy. Verdinelli and Biever (1990) further suggest that clients may prefer to discuss an experience in the language in which it occurred. This proposed solution may be seen as respectful of the agentic client (Brown, 2007) who is positioned as able to choose what language they prefer to express themselves in yet may also simplify the question of language difference to verbal understanding and expression. Therapists who speak the same language are constructed as better positioned to offer therapy as both client and counsellor are seen as similar based on their mutual possession of specific linguistic codes. These propositions thereby view language as a transparent means of communication without considering other intersectional factors (Heller, 2007). The sociocultural factors associated

with the language being spoken such as class, ethnicity or gender (Ivers, Ivers & Duffey, 2013) may also need to be considered; as Stanley (2013) argues this is in keeping with counselling psychology's consideration of clients as inseparable from their social environments.

Although limited, the above suggestions may be considered in line with counselling psychology's humanistic epistemology as they place the bilingual client's needs at the centre. The ever-increasing focus on research and evidence-based practice within counselling psychology (Corrie, 2003) however place counselling psychology within a positivist epistemology that may lie in contradiction to these same humanistic underpinnings. An example of this is illustrated in the prominence given in the therapeutic literature to evidence from psycholinguistics and neurolinguistics (Canestri & Reppen; 2000; Pérez Foster, 2006). It may be argued that by privileging biological understandings of how different languages are stored in the brain through cognitive and neurological mechanisms, bilingualism is divorced from the social context in which these languages are learnt (Heller, 2007). Understanding bilingualism solely through a biological evidence base may, therefore, produce limited knowledge for counselling psychologists to consider.

In order to ascertain that counselling psychologists maintain broad empirical modes of understanding alongside subjective ones that privilege the individual experience of each and every client (Goldstein, 2010) they are asked to espouse the identity of both scientist-practitioner and reflective-practitioner (Woolfe, 2016). Furthermore, integrative approaches (O'Brien, 2010) and pluralistic therapy (Cooper & McLeod, 2007) have also been developed as a means to value and consider ideas from varying epistemologies. As a result it is acknowledged that no one therapeutic stance is sufficient and complete.



As Rizq (2010) suggests, counselling psychology's postmodern stance allows for a deconstruction of the counselling psychologist as possessing expert knowledge and allows counselling psychologists to negotiate various forms of knowledge from different epistemologies. Counselling psychologists are therefore encouraged to dispute modernist assumptions regarding bilingualism in therapeutic practice so that they may reflexively critique the ways in which they might perpetuate oppressive narratives in their client work (Brown, 2007). In addition, an understanding of psychological knowledge as linguistically constituted and perpetuated through power dynamics, makes the poststructural discursive stance of this thesis pertinent to research the discursive power games operating within bilingual therapeutic practices in Malta. In the next section, an argument for how FDA's poststructuralist stance may contribute to reflexivity in counselling psychology is made and is followed by a discussion of how Foucault's work may be useful to this study.

### **1.3 Poststructuralism and Foucauldian discourse analysis: An epistemological stance**

A Foucauldian understanding of discourse has been recognised as a useful epistemological stance to take when analysing the role of language within psychological research (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008; Willig, 2013) since the 1970s. Parker (1992) argues that traditional psychology is a modern discipline that seeks to utilise empirical modes of research to uncover truths about mental processes that may then be applied universally. FDA's poststructuralist stance implicates its understanding of social and psychological life as constituted through various power relations that are maintained through discourse (Burr, 2003) thereby allowing positivist forms of knowledge traditionally promoted within psychology to be challenged. In this section, I outline the development of poststructuralism. I next discuss Foucault's theories with a specific focus on discourse, and their relevance to this thesis.

### **1.3.1 Poststructuralism: an outline.**

A poststructuralist understanding of discourse developed from the structuralist Saussurian idea that language is a system used to make meaning. As Drewery and Monk (1994) elaborate, De Saussure used the terms ‘signifier’ and ‘signified’ i.e. the visual appearance or sound of the word and its meaning to represent the understanding that meaning resides in the sign and not in any external source. Furthermore, as Burr (2003) proposes, structuralism involves a search for the underlying structures that allow systems of meaning to occur as well as what these systems allow to be thought, said and done. Structuralism is thereby considered to represent a departure from the modern movement and its belief in a knowable world (Gergen, 1990). Yet, as Sturrock (2003) suggests, structuralism promotes the idea that beneath these systems is a knowable truth that may be applied across cultures and subjects thus binding them together and precluding the possibility of diversity.

While retaining structuralism’s emphasis on language, poststructuralism rejects the existence of underlying structures that can be discovered by focussing instead on the role discourse plays in constituting the subject and promoting forms of truth. Poststructuralism, therefore, shuns positivist claims to truth and objectivity (Gergen, 2001; Burr, 2003) with deconstruction used as a tool to analyse discourse in order to query it and render it problematic (Parker, 1992). Gergen (1990) acknowledges that psychology’s move towards poststructuralism allows psychologists to question forms of knowledge previously taken for granted by demonstrating how psychological notions may be socially, historically, and culturally embedded.

From a Foucauldian perspective, this means that notions of truth, the formation of the subject, and forms of knowledge are all constructed by sociohistorical forces. Although Foucault (1966) originally maintained a structuralist epistemology, Rabate (2003) argues that

Foucault later disputed structuralism's belief in observable underlying structures and the possibility of objectively extricating the subject from discourse. Schirato et al. (2012) suggest that while Foucault agreed with the structuralist idea that constructs within society such as social class have implications for the way subjects are allowed to lead their lives, he was also interested in what was repressed due to these constructions i.e. which categories were made impossible to consider within circulating forms of knowledge thus making his theories poststructuralist.

In maintaining a poststructuralist epistemology, this study, therefore, does not treat bilingualism within Maltese therapeutic practice as an object that is knowable. Alternatively, it privileges the understanding that language is central to the social construction of knowledge and that the object of inquiry, may be variously understood. This thesis places discourse and what it prohibits or permits at its fore.

### **1.3.2 The Foucauldian gaze.**

The main interest of this thesis is how therapeutic practitioners discursively construct Maltese-English bilingualism within their therapeutic practice, what discourses they resource these constructions with and the truth claims made as a result (Moore & Seu, 2010). Foucault (1972) conceptualised discourse as “practices which form the objects of which they speak” (p.49). Discourse may, therefore, be described as a cluster of statements which produce particular ways of looking at things, events or people. Furthermore, discourse does not emerge from the innermost thoughts of a person but is produced and reproduced socially thus implicating the contextual location of the subject in this process. As Burr (2003) states, this position does not deny the existence of a physical world but instead focuses on how we inhabit it according to the discourses available to us.

Instead of holding any single ideology up as possessing truth, Foucault (1981) was interested in what discourses circulating within any social, cultural and historical space opened up and shut down for the individuals made subject to them. He, therefore, sought to go beyond a realist and essentialist style of thinking in order to question how what has been considered to be true becomes so rather than to seek truth. Foucault used this understanding to challenge how subjects were governed through language and other apparatuses of power that allowed them to think and act according to discourses considered to be permissible. In order to do this, Foucault adopted a historical perspective to trace the development of constructions such as “madness” (1961) and “homosexuality” (1978, 1984, 1986) and the positions subjects were allowed or denied from occupying as a result (Schirato et al., 2012). Discourse may, consequently, be described as deeply interlinked with institutional and social practices that control forms of action through the constructions of reality they allow (Dickerson, 2012). Through these understandings Foucault (1980) privileged the idea that knowledge and power are joined through discourse and thus inseparable.

Foucault (1982) also highlighted how discourse is implicated in the formation of the self and identified three ways in which objectification turns individuals into subjects that may be pertinent for counselling psychologists to consider. Firstly, modes of inquiry such as psychology acquire scientific status and produce forms of knowledge held up as legitimate. Secondly, such forms of knowledge create dividing practices that enable the subject to divide himself/herself from others e.g. monolingual/bilingual, Maltese-speaking/English-speaking. Lastly, the individual transforms themselves into a subject through self-recognition and regulation thereby resourcing their practices by circulating forms of discourse.

Different discourses may hence be conceptualised as assembling reality in different ways, producing and endorsing various forms of knowledge as a result. It may be argued that what

is commonly referred to as knowledge may be simply viewed as a particular form of discourse that has been held up as true and correct (Brown, 2007) within specific social, cultural and historical sites. The emergence of dominant forms of discourse depicted as true may benefit particular groups through a process that is neither intentional nor predictable. As a result, possibilities for other forms of discourse are shut down and marginalised groups who do not subscribe to them may be created thereby highlighting the power relations within discourse.

Foucault's work on power/knowledge demonstrates an understanding of power and knowledge as mutually constitutive (Martín Alcoff, 2013) and highlights the need to understand how power relations and practices impact what is knowable and how we come to know what we know. Power is not conceptualised as an entity that is static or owned by any one group or individual: it is exercised rather than possessed and circulates rather than is static. For Foucault (1982), power acts upon existing or future actions thus achieving a disciplinary effect as evident in the normalising effects of discourse. Furthermore, the concept of normality encourages individuals to monitor their behaviour and compare it to the dominant, normative discourse thus shutting down alternative possibilities for action through self-surveillance (Foucault, 1978). As Burr (2003) argues, psychology may be implicated in this normalising process as it provides ways of assessing and categorising individuals in order to produce norms for what is thought to be the well-balanced, emotionally healthy subject.

Additionally, these forms of knowledge may enable or impede counselling psychologists by obscuring non-dominant discourses and promoting dominant ones. These hegemonic understandings are then implicated in creating a standard for how counselling psychologists should work therapeutically. The self is thus subjected to the power; meaning, and regulation offered by that discourse (Foucault, 1991, 2003; Harré & Davis, 1990) resulting in particular

formations of the self. The subject is consequently tied to their own identity by self-knowledge; a practice considered highly important in Western, therapeutic discourse (Parker, 1998).

Discursive power may, therefore, be linked to subjectivity (Foucault, 2005) which may be understood as a site where power is exercised: particular actions from the other act upon the subject modifying how they are allowed to categorise themselves. Burck (2011) and Garrett (2007) argue that for the bilingual, language socialization for each linguistic code and the way in which each language is deployed and utilised in interactions leads to different forms of subjectivity. The links of bilingualism to subjectivity and discursive power may then be considered as relevant to this thesis. Participants may use discursive constructions resourced by dominant understandings of bilingualism, to resource their identities as practitioners but also to position clients in particular ways.

Foucault (1975) postulates that there is no power without resistance meaning that power needs resistance to spread but it is also through resistance that power is disrupted. Foucault (1982) stated that at its most extreme, power either renders the subject impotent or the subject confronts it and transforms it through an act of resistance. Power is thereby not inherently repressive but created out of forms of discourse disguised as knowledge. Resistance, therefore, allows for a counter-discourse which as Brown (2007) argues, just like power, may be both “constituting and constraining” (p. 5).

Instances of resistance to dominant discourses are also of analytic concern to this thesis. By paying attention to marginalized discourses, the legitimacy of dominant discourses of bilingualism as problematic may be challenged. Identifying points of resistance may thus open up the possibility for multiple understandings of bilingualism previously considered deviant (Burr, 2003). These may provide counselling psychologists with alternative

conceptualisations that may not be commonly provided within therapeutic and psychological literature.

### **1.3.3 Power/knowledge and bilingualism.**

Power and knowledge are seen to be highly important issues in counselling psychology. Both the BPS (2009) and the HCPC (2016) urge counselling psychologists to be aware of the authority they may symbolically carry and the impact this may have on clients. The unquestioned use of psychological knowledge regarding bilingualism across individuals and irrespective of context makes issues of power and knowledge an important analytic concern of this study. The de-theorising stance employed by Foucault means that he did not seek to create a formula for the analysis of power (Hook, 2008). Nevertheless, Foucault (1982) proposed that a consideration of how power relations are brought into being, how they are enacted through institutions and how they are justified when analysing power relations is a way to gain a better understanding of the dynamics of power.

The relationship between psychological knowledge and power is further elaborated by Rose (1985) who argues that the Psy-disciplines i.e. psychology, psychotherapy, and psychiatry, encourage a form of self-scrutiny which has led to the legitimisation of professional intervention in the personal life of the individual. This form of social control is an effective form of disciplinary power in spite of psychology being positioned as a liberatory project. As Samuels (2014) claims, therapy takes place within a socially induced relationship with therapeutic practices seen as social constructs that reflect “history, power dynamics and authority.” (p. 646). Psychological knowledge, therefore, has implications for how people internal (psychologists) and external (clients, society) to psychology are treated through the forms of knowledge it subscribes to as well as the practices it engages in (Parker, 1992). Furthermore, psychology may maintain systems of domination and oppression through the

knowledge it produces and activities it engages in (Hook, 2008). Traditional psychological and therapeutic literature may privilege specific understandings of bilingualism and its relationship to counselling psychology that subscribe to dominant forms of knowledge. As Foucault (1982) argues, a critique of power relations in regards to knowledge about bilingualism may shed light on what conditions are needed to transform them. It may hence be considered important for counselling psychologists to be aware of how they position themselves in regards to these legitimised forms of knowledge.

An illustration of therapeutic research on bilingualism demonstrates that monolingual therapeutic practitioners experienced working with bilingual clients (Bowker & Richards, 2004; Stevens & Holland, 2008) or of being bilingual practitioners (Verdinelli & Biever, 1990; Costa & Dewaele, 2014) as problematic. Such results demonstrate the dominance of discourses that construct bilingualism as a deviant practice (see section 1.2). Current conceptualisations circulating within psychological knowledge may, therefore, offer a limited perspective through which to understand bilingualism and its implications for practice. A critique of power relations in regards to knowledge about bilingualism may, however, shed light on what conditions are needed to transform them (Foucault, 1982). This may allow for a different social understanding of the enactment of power that moves away from a realist understanding of social categories (Stahl, 2004) such as “bilingualism” dominated by discourses resourced by monolingual ideology.

A critical stance may be applied to various psychological topics (Hook, 2001) and is thus highly relevant to the aim of this thesis as discussed in Section 1.1. It may be concluded that a Foucauldian (1982) critique of the circulation of power/knowledge through discourses surrounding bilingualism in Malta as well as what points of resistance may be present within the discourses deployed, is of great relevance to this thesis. Researching Maltese therapeutic



practitioners' accounts of bilingualism within therapy is also a means of problematizing current conceptualizations surrounding Maltese and English and understanding what these may enable or constrain in therapeutic practice.

#### **1.4 The potential contributions to counselling psychology**

This chapter has identified and critically outlined some of the current understandings of bilingualism and how these may be rendered problematic in the practice of counselling psychology in Malta. This thesis does not seek to replace one form of truth for another (Graham, 2005) but aims to use FDA to critically evaluate Maltese therapeutic practitioners' talk regarding the use of Maltese and English within the therapeutic relationship. In this section, an argument for the relevance of this thesis to counselling psychology is made through the discussion of possible contributions to practice this study hopes to make.

The political nature of FDA allows counselling psychologists to acknowledge their power as practitioners who have control over the technical psychological language used within the profession in varying locations. Milner and O'Byrne (2004) argue that language may create narratives which construct clients in particular ways. When applied to bilingual clients, these marginalising discourses may potentially create what Saxena (2009) calls 'linguistic others' (p. 168). Counselling psychologists may not always be aware of the implications of linguistic differences yet clients may require counselling psychologists who have an awareness of socio-political forces and the impact these may have on therapeutic work. Burck (2011) further proposes that an intersectional approach to research on bilingualism allows for an appreciation of language as intersecting with the different social categories in which people are positioned such as race and social class. This stance, therefore, allows for an understanding of the category of bilingualism in Malta as multifarious and power-laden.

As Fuertes (2004) further argues, there is a need for articles that examine bilingual issues in counselling and training in order to increase awareness surrounding culture and language. Furthermore, Strawbridge and Woolfe (2010) state that counselling psychology needs an understanding of wider contexts e.g. social, political and organizational, that can help inform practice. By situating this research within the Maltese context, it is expected that this study may potentially shed more light on the wider sociohistorical and sociocultural understandings of bilingualism in Malta and how these may be replayed within therapy. This may help counselling psychologists to gain further awareness of the social processes implicated in forms of knowledge that resource their understandings of bilingualism within professional practice.

While Foucault did not explicitly treat colonialism in his writing, its impact as an apparatus charged with ordering and organising peoples and land has been recognised (Schirato et al., 2012). Frosh (2013) argues that psychology may not be ready to acknowledge its role in postcolonial discourse and the ensuing impact on the construction of the psychological and social subject. It may be considered necessary for postcolonial contexts to produce their own forms of psychological knowledge (Allwood & Berry, 2008) in order to question the dominance of Western therapeutic practices. Hook and Truscott (2013) offer a Foucauldian-informed reading of Frantz Fanon's (1952) work on postcolonialism and psychoanalysis thus demonstrating the applicability of Foucault's work to understanding the impact of colonialism. FDA may, therefore, be considered a suitable approach to highlighting the potential power relations implicit in participant accounts of therapeutic practice in the Maltese, bilingual, and postcolonial context.

Furthermore, this thesis aims to contribute to counselling psychology by providing a form of postcolonial knowledge that is situated within the Maltese context. As Macleod and

Bhatia (2008) argue, postcolonial studies have been dominated by textual and theoretical work. This study hopes to offer a different understanding of postcolonialism and counselling psychology by utilising a poststructuralist qualitative methodology to highlight pertinent issues. It also aims to provide a wider understanding of bilingualism by highlighting how it is constituted and reconstituted within power relations and how the resulting discourses may be deployed during accounts given by psychological practitioners.

Additionally, Crocket (2012) argues that the practice of therapy within postcolonial contexts requires constant monitoring in order to resist deploying colonising discourses. A Foucauldian perspective would also allow Maltese counselling psychologists to critically review their therapeutic practices thus offering new insights regarding how discourses surrounding the use of Maltese and English are constructed, and how these both limit and enable professionals and clients. On a wider level, it also invites all counselling psychologists to reflect on how the understanding of the presence of different languages within the therapy room may be influenced by social structures and power relations (Spong, 2010) and the implications for practice these might have.

### **1.5 Summary and conclusion**

In this chapter, I have problematized the category of bilingualism and how truth claims surrounding it have developed and emerged over time. I have highlighted how bilingualism is constituted within postcolonial discourse and described current understandings of bilingualism within the Maltese context. I have also discussed the poststructuralist epistemological stance of FDA while outlining Foucault's theories of discourse, power and knowledge. Lastly, I have argued for the need for this thesis and its relevance to counselling psychology.

I next (Chapter Two) offer a brief genealogically-informed outline of how political and historical processes have constituted and given importance to the category of bilingualism in Malta. I then turn to a critical literature review of current forms of psychological knowledge regarding bilingualism within therapy in this same chapter. I then (Chapter Three) provide a detailed description of the methodology, the epistemological underpinnings of FDA, and describe how data were collected. In Chapter Four I give a detailed account of the discourses drawn on by participants and use FDA to critique and question them. I conclude with Chapter Five where I discuss the potential implications for practice the research findings offer, evaluate this thesis, and offer suggestions for further research.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Mapping bilingualism within the Maltese context and therapeutic practice: a genealogically-informed, critical literature review**

#### **2.1 Introduction to Chapter Two**

In this chapter, the psychological and therapeutic literature on bilingualism is presented and critically reviewed. As Hook and Truscott (2013) argue, psychological knowledge must be rendered an object of analysis in order for it to be used as a tool in understanding the psychological impact of postcolonialism. A critical discursive and sociohistorical stance is thereby taken in order to trace the multiple constructions of bilingualism of relevance to contemporary uses in counselling psychology. Their influence in postcolonial contexts and the power/knowledge relations these constructions have as applied to psychological practice will also be outlined. Furthermore, these constructions will be critiqued in order to highlight the possible power dynamics perpetuated by these forms of knowledge and to draw attention to the implications these may have for counselling psychologists and their clients (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008) as relevant to answering the research question: How do therapeutic practitioners in Malta construct the bilingual use of Maltese and English within their therapeutic work?

As noted in section 1.2.2, counselling psychology places evidence-based practice at its core (Woolfe & Strawbridge, 2010). Corrie (2010) however problematizes this by disputing the neutrality of what is considered evidence and noting how it may be shaped by political, economic, and social demands. Evidence may hence be subjected to critique in order to examine the truth claims it produces and perpetuates within therapeutic practice. As is in keeping with a postmodern stance all forms of expert knowledge may be questioned (Rizq, 2010). This chapter, therefore, offers a review of both qualitative and quantitative

studies on bilingualism and psychological knowledge in order to critically explore the various truth claims presented in diverse forms of research evidence. The literature on bilingualism from a range of therapeutic schools including person-centred, psychodynamic and CBT, among others, shall also be reviewed in order to reflect counselling psychology's integrative (O'Brien, 2010) and pluralistic stance (Cooper & McLeod, 2007).

This chapter will begin with a genealogically-informed tracing of how bilingualism became an object of discourse in Malta. Foucault (1977) proposed genealogy as a tool to trace and examine the sociohistorical processes informing contemporary discursive practices. As Arribas-Ayllon and Walkerdine (2008) argue, genealogy is useful in outlining how current power/knowledge relations in psychological theories and practices have developed in order to produce "expert" forms of knowledge through the sourcing of historical documentation. Genealogy is therefore not a way to seek solutions for discovering the truth but is rather a means of developing an alternative reading of current psychological truths in order to allow alternative discourses to emerge. Bearing this in mind, the aim of the next section is not to provide a historically exhaustive account of the development of bilingualism in Malta. This thesis uses contemporary readings of sociocultural and sociohistorical influences that have enabled bilingualism in Malta to become a means to advance political interests thus taking a genealogically-informed perspective. It also allows for a reading of how these discursive truths may at present be replicated (Malson, 1998) within participants' accounts of their therapeutic practice in Malta.

Following this genealogically-informed account, a critique of psychological literature pertaining to bilingualism in therapy is offered in order to show the multiple and shifting ways in which this particular expert knowledge has been formed. Both these sections shall,

therefore, highlight the various discourses resourcing understandings of bilingualism available to therapeutic practitioners in Malta from both a local and professional perspective.

## **2.2 A historical outline of bilingualism in Malta**

Bilingualism may be said to be a long-standing situation in Malta (Vella, 2003). This section outlines a history of language in Malta from the 11<sup>th</sup> century up until independence from British rule in 1964 and ends with a brief overview of the current situation. Due to Malta's geographic position in the central Mediterranean and its proximity to both Southern Europe and North Africa, Malta is considered to have a long-standing history of cultural influences. These may be reflected in the constitution of the Maltese language itself and also through the presence of various languages at different historical points. The Mediterranean has often been constructed as a region that marks a separation between Christianity to the North and Islam to the South (Pace, 2005; Mallette, 2010). This division of Semitic (North African) and Romance (European) influences served a particular purpose in solidifying Malta's position as a Christian, Mediterranean, and later, European island thus placing the relationship between language, geography, religion, and identity at the fore.

Furthermore, this divide is considered to be present within circulating understandings of the Maltese language as provided by linguistic knowledge. Comrie (2007) proposes that on a structural level, Maltese may be considered a Semitic language due to its links to Arabic yet is written in Roman script and contains influences from the Romance languages, particularly Italian/Sicilian, with which it has been in contact for centuries. This classification is not understood as neutral with Mallette (2010) arguing that this structural understanding is a remnant of 19<sup>th</sup> century philological views that aimed to scientifically create order by classifying languages. This description of Maltese may, therefore, be seen as rooted in expert

forms of knowledge that sought to dissect and divide the roots of the Maltese language in order to provide understandings of linguistic structure as related to historic influences.

### **2.2.1 Bilingualism in Malta: 1090 C.E. - 1560 C.E.**

From c. 870 C.E. up until c. 1090 C.E., Maltese society was thought to be mainly Islamic yet the 11<sup>th</sup> century is thought to have been a time of major cultural change in the Maltese islands. With the arrival of the Christian Normans, Malta moved from an Islamic Arabic society to a Christian European one yet still used a language considered Semitic (Wettinger, 1988). This was seen as problematic and Malta's Christian heritage was used as a means to distance the Maltese from the Semitic roots of the Maltese language associated with the Muslim enemy (Frendo, 2008; Mallette, 2010). Wettinger (1988) argues that this prejudice was perpetuated within Maltese society, strongly attached to its Catholic identity, throughout the centuries. He further proposes that the use of the word "Semitic" instead of "Arabic" to describe Maltese is in itself symbolic of Malta's need to assert itself as a Christian nation by distancing itself from any associations with Islam through the use of a word considered more palatable. Following the 11<sup>th</sup> century, Malta functioned as an extension of Sicily with Sicilian dialect used as the language of bureaucracy and trade thus enabling Sicilian to act as administrative language; a situation that remained in place until 1560.

As Wettinger (1988) states, it would be anachronistic to speak of colonialism prior to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It may, however, be argued, that during this period the seeds for the politicisation of Maltese were sown. Following the adoption of the Christian faith, Maltese was seen as embodying the "enemy" i.e. the Arab Muslim and was linked to Malta's Islamic past thus rendering Maltese undesirable. The use of Sicilian for bureaucratic matters following annexation may be seen as having created a distinct role for Maltese as an informal language requiring another language to communicate and carry out institutional tasks.



### **2.2.2 Bilingualism in Malta: 1560-1800.**

The year 1560 marked another change in Malta's administration. Following its expulsion from Rhodes, Malta was granted to the Order of St John by King Charles V the Holy Roman Emperor. As a result, Malta became a "linguistic melting pot" (Mallette, 2010, p. 103) due to the presence of Knights from Provence, Aragon, England, Germany, France, Auvergne, and Italy. Tuscan Italian replaced Sicilian as the official language for formal modes of communication. Maltese in the meantime remained the language "closer to the soil" (Frendo, 2008, p. 218) and was mainly used by the local populace. During this time, Frendo (1991) argues that Malta's cultural identity was highly influenced by the Order of St John who reinforced a view of Malta as a Christian bastion able to withstand the onslaught of the Muslim world. It was therefore in the interest of preserving Malta's Christian identity that Maltese was further maintained as a mode of communication considered informal.

The first accounts of Maltese by foreign travellers visiting Malta during this period link it to ancient languages such as Carthaginian and Phoenician as well as to Arabic and Hebrew. Scientific understandings circulating in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the emergence of the study of linguistics offered different descriptions through a foreign gaze (Mallette, 2010) as described in Section 2.2. Meanwhile, the first local accounts of Maltese emerged between the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> when Mikiel Anton Vassalli (1764-1829) used philological understandings to publish his work on Maltese grammar thus making his work a product of modernity. He linked Maltese to statehood thereby linking it to identity; this was a novel conceptualisation of Maltese that was previously viewed as a lower level language that represented unwanted ties to an Islamic past. This nationalist discourse was resourced by German Romantic discourse beginning to circulate at the time, which

constructed national languages as essential to nationhood (Hobsbawm, 1996; Heller, 2007; Mallette, 2010).

Napoleon's arrival in Malta in 1798 marked the establishment of bureaucratic institutions yet this period was short lived. French political aspirations at the time intended to unite all subjects under a political ideal, as opposed to a national one, thereby extending rights to members of its state regardless of ethnicity and language (Hobsbawm, 1996) in a bid to emphasize universal suffrage. Following an insurrection against the French, Malta was annexed to Britain in 1800 and remained part of the British Empire until gaining independence in 1964. Malta hence became an outpost of the British Empire and was considered to be of military and strategic importance.

During this period, it may be argued that bilingualism in Malta (Italian and Maltese) continued to be maintained as a means for the Maltese to communicate with the Christian Mediterranean world and the wider world at large (Mallette, 2010). The binary divisions between Maltese as popular language and Italian as bureaucratic language remained unchanged thereby demonstrating the hegemony of truth claims regarding Maltese as an unwanted linguistic practice that had no role in public governance.

### **2.2.3 Bilingualism in Malta: the British colonial gaze (1800-1964).**

British rule in Malta may be thought of as characterised by a duality between economic gains and political losses (Fenech, 2014). As Malta was ceded to the British Empire and not conquered; the Maltese ruling classes expected representational rights (Frendo, 1991) yet these demands were rejected by the British imperialists. Frendo argues that as a colonial possession, Malta was considered a fortress island and therefore cannot be said to have been considered a nation-state. This consideration of Malta as a fortress led the Duke of

Wellington to state that granting political rights was as unnecessary as giving them to a man-of-war. Such military metaphors illustrate the construction of Malta as a battleship containing subjects that did not require authority over themselves. As Petrica (2011) and Mallette (2010) argue, this colonial view of Malta impacted the metaphoric construction of Malta through the British, colonial gaze as reflected in the political struggle for nationhood.

Nevertheless, Frendo (1991) argues that the characteristics deemed necessary for nationhood were present: Malta was geographically defined, contained a homogeneous population with one religion, and had a shared sense of history. This separated Malta from other colonies that were divided along, racial, religious, tribal or cultural lines. By this time, Malta's culture appeared to be Italianate with the Italian language synonymous with education and privilege. Most individuals were able to speak Maltese in their daily lives and some publications were printed in Maltese yet it was not considered an official language and still did not have an established form of grammar or alphabet.

The hegemonic status of Maltese and Italian remained unquestioned until the beginning of British colonial rule (Mallette, 2010). It was during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century that the Maltese language was contested as part of local European, nationalist discourse circulating at the time (Hobsbawm, 1996). Maltese had competition from Italian and English for the role of national language; language hence came to the fore as a political issue. This became known as the Language Question and was used as an argument by Maltese politicians to demand parliamentary representation. Trilingualism became the battleground for national identity: English and Italian were pitted against each other by pro-Anglicization and pro-nationalist factions respectively while Maltese was linked to social and emotive bonds to nationhood (Frendo, 1991).

Maltese was attacked as a liability by 19<sup>th</sup>-century nationalists who preferred to elevate Italian to national language status. Italian was promoted for its perceived superiority at enabling the eloquent expression of Malta's Latin culture; it was the natural vehicle for the Mediterranean, Catholic soul. English, on the other hand, was seen as belonging to the Northern, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant world and thus unsuitable (Frendo, 2008). Furthermore, English was also seen as the supreme embodiment of colonisation and therefore a symbol of subjugation (Frendo, 2014). Language consequently became the national cause for the colonised Maltese with varying groups promoting the privileging of English or Italian.

Although inspired by German, Romantic, nationalist movements, the push for Italian as national language may be seen as irregular. Under nationalist ideals, Maltese could be considered the language symbolic of nationhood yet Maltese was not seen as fit to fill this role. The educated classes continued to push for Italian as the language of the nation as it was the language they were educated in. On a wider level, it was thought that it would enhance connections with Rome- seen as Malta's spiritual and cultural capital (Frendo, 2008). The reunification of Italy occurring in the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw political exiles from Italy residing in Malta. This occurrence reinforced the push for Italian as national language to reflect Malta's identity yet also became a cause for concern for the British who questioned Italian interests in including Malta as part of their reunification project (Frendo, 1991).

Language thus became a site of political contention between the British rulers and Maltese subjects. Frendo (1991) argues that in order to distance the Maltese from Italian nationalist aspirations, the British sought to emphasize Maltese as the natural language for children to be educated in. This idea was also promoted by some local politicians who saw English as a means for the Maltese to gain employment with the British who created new jobs as a result of Malta's new military role. The British further highlighted the links between

Maltese and Arabic to appease their colonial interests in the Islamic world. As Mallette (2010) argues, this strategic move infuriated Maltese nationalists who perceived this as a move to strengthen Malta's dependence on Britain and undermine Italian by privileging a language not spoken anywhere else in the world.

These developments lead to two government hearings held in 1837-1838 and in the 1880s the purpose of which was to discuss the use of Maltese in education (Frendo, 1991; Mallette, 2010). In 1879, the Keenan report suggested that Maltese be used in early education as a bridge to learning English in school. It was further proposed that Italian be an optional language for the intellectually gifted thus decreasing the language's influence while elevating Maltese to a language worthy of educational interest. These suggestions, however, led to mixed responses. Fears about the promotion of Maltese were expressed as this move risked undoing the nationalist's project of promoting Italian as the language tying Malta to the rest of Europe. Educational interests thus became a means for the privileged political classes to promote their disdain for Maltese (Aquilina, 1961). Contrastingly, this report was welcomed by those in favour of promoting education in the "natural" language of the Maltese. As a result of these educational changes, the association of Maltese to nationalism was solidified (Frendo, 1991).

By the 1920s, there were more people who could speak English than Italian; many could speak both, and more than one-third of the population could write in Maltese. Migration to English-speaking countries increased and thus learning English became important. Maltese was also strengthened in the 1930s as exemplified by the replacement of Italian with Maltese as the official language of the courts thus enabling citizens being tried to follow proceedings (Frendo, 1991). This period also marked an increased association of the Maltese language with a nationalist sentiment on various levels.

The recording and release of music records in Maltese occurring at the time were a political and social statement used to promote Maltese over Italian and thus push the latter language out of use (Alamango, 2014). Informal activities thus were utilised as tools to promote a political agenda in Maltese, the language of the working classes. The language question came to an official end in 1934 when both English and Maltese were made official languages (Mallette, 2010) thus cementing the exclusion of Italian from the public sphere. As Frenco (1991) highlights, Malta's bilingual official language status marked a dualistic understanding whereby English was the language representing the British Empire and Maltese was the language of the people.

The development of Maltese as a language, as illustrated, has been linked to various dominant groups, with a resulting view of Maltese as a language that reflects the social influences that have dominated at various historical points. Bilingualism during Malta's British colonial period became an object of contention that was regulated and manoeuvred by its imperial rulers for their own political benefit. As a result, language became a form of panopticon (Foucault, 1977; Stroud, 2007) surveying and controlling what political and national aspirations the Maltese subject was allowed or prohibited from upholding.

Efforts by British rulers to substitute English with Italian in Malta were purposefully made to quash nationalist aspirations at a time when Italy was attaining its own. The endorsement of Maltese was a move to promote British interests within Arabic-speaking territories. Furthermore, British colonial control over language became a practice that inserted itself into the everyday lives of its subjects through institutional practices (Stroud, 2007) such as promoting Maltese and English in schools in order to eliminate Italian. It was through institutional practices that the linking of Maltese to national identity was set in motion. The decision to legitimise Maltese by rendering it an official language together with English

became a means to cement British rule over Maltese subjects. Maltese thus became implicated in the reconstitution of the Maltese subject as citizen yet also as native (Stroud, 2007) through the bureaucratic and political dominance of English and relegation of Maltese to cultural language; bilingualism thus became the site of a binary discourse.

#### **2.2.4 Bilingualism in Malta: the current situation.**

Maltese and English retained official language status upon Malta's independence in 1964 with Maltese becoming an official language of the European Union in 2004 (Language Education Policy Profile: Malta, 2015); as Petrica (2011) argues the project to link Maltese to Europe was thus completed.

The current linguistic situation in Malta may be described as one where social and educational bilingualism allow for the presence of both Maltese and English. Camilleri Grima (2013b) states that dialectical Maltese is also spoken and a level of multilingualism remains with Italian widely spoken. Over 95% of the population state that Maltese is their native tongue (Krug & Rosen, 2012) while 90% claim various levels of proficiency in English (Sciriha, 1999). Maltese and English are not however thought to be used equally within all domains- when it comes to reading and writing, English is preferred to Maltese.

#### **2.2.5 Summary of these historical understandings.**

The social and historical processes reviewed in this section highlight how languages in Malta have occupied varying meaningful positions (Auer, 2007). As has been shown, Maltese and English have occupied binary and distinct roles through various points in time. Maltese became fixed in its role as a lower class and unwanted linguistic practice yet it was during British colonial rule that Maltese became endowed with the political power to allow it to vie for national language status. It is therefore suggested that Maltese was constructed as a

denigrated language and later reconstructed as “natural” language of the Maltese within the public sphere to suit a political purpose. Italian, historically the language of privilege and professional status, was subdued and marginalised by the British who replaced it with English in order to cement their status as colonial rulers of Malta and eliminate the nationalist aspirations of pro-Italian supporters.

The historical practices associated with Maltese as a language considered both crude and emotive and English as the language of colonial rule and privilege may also resonate within current therapeutic practices in Malta. These discursive formations of Maltese and English as occupying varying roles may offer an understanding of dividing practices that allow the subject to be described as Maltese-speaking or English-speaking. It may thus be argued that bilingualism as a practice and ideology may be submitted to critique in order to highlight how relations of power have led to social organization and regulation (Heller, 2007) within psychological knowledge. Psychology as a profession has been considered a discipline that regulates knowledge regarding bilingualism and therefore a critique of current understandings of psychological knowledge within therapeutic practice will be dealt with next.

### **2.3 Psychological understandings of bilingualism within therapeutic practice**

In this section, psychological knowledge regarding the category of bilingualism as it applies to counselling psychology practice shall be presented and interrogated. Firstly, the psycholinguistic and neurolinguistic evidence base shall be critically discussed. This shall be followed by a critical discussion of proposed forms of knowledge from various therapeutic schools as well as sociocultural and sociohistorical understandings of bilingualism as they relate to postcolonial contexts. Contributions from the Maltese setting shall also be unpacked and critiqued.



### **2.3.1 The psycholinguistic and neurolinguistic perspective.**

Therapeutic literature has often engaged with psycholinguistics and neurolinguistics (see section 1.2.1) in order to provide professional understandings of working with bilingual clients. It may, therefore, be considered pertinent to start off by critically outlining the ideas proposed by these theoretical understandings.

Psycholinguistics has been described as the study of the psychological and cognitive mechanisms underpinning language acquisition and processing. Skinner (1957) is considered to have provided one of the earliest explanations for language acquisition. He believed that children developed language through environmental influences such as the positive reinforcement of correct sounds. Chomsky (1965) criticised this behavioural understanding of language acquisition instead proposing the theory of Universal Grammar which suggested that children contain an innate ability to learn verbal modes of communication. Later constructivist studies suggest that children may be sensitive to grammatical patterns which if heard often enough, they are able to reproduce (Rebuscat & Williams, 2012). Various empirically-based studies on bilingualism have relied on these understandings of language acquisition as internally prescribed, to produce knowledge that promotes the cognitive gains of being bilingual.

The perceived benefits of speaking more than one language have been acknowledged by research carried out over the past decades. These studies have identified the following advantages: advanced processing of verbal material (Ben-Zeev, 1977), increased perceptual performance (Duncan & DeAvila Edward, 1979), improved formation of cognitive processes (Fardeau, 1993), augmented ability to think abstractly about language (Hakuta, 1985) as well as higher scores on intelligence tests when compared to monolingual scores (Peal & Lambert,

1962). Moreover, bilingualism has also been implicated in the offset of age-related loss of executive functions (Bialystok, Craik, Klein & Viswanathan, 2004).

Such evidence has been utilised by Ivers, Ivers and Duffey (2013) to encourage counselling psychologists to become bilingual and thus improve their therapeutic practice through neurological gains. They argue that being bilingual is seen as improving cognitive processes taking place within the executive function thus allowing for a faster processing of information when working with clients, most especially clients from vastly differing backgrounds. These understandings propagate a view of bilingualism as highly beneficial yet also lock bilingualism within the confines of cognitive processes thus negating the social and cultural values given to different languages.

Neurolinguistic studies have further provided readings of bilingualism as located within “the bilingual brain” (Vaid, 1986, p. 81; Grosjean, Li, & Bialystok, 2013, p. 169) thus emphasising the neural aspects of what it means to be bilingual. This phrase suggests that there may be differences in the neurological understandings of the brain structure and associated abilities for bilingual individuals as compared to those of monolinguals. Positivist, neurological research thus has the potential to engender specific views of bilingualism as related to brain structure and formation.

Furthermore, according to Pérez Foster (2006), neurolinguistics has produced evidence to support the idea that second languages learnt later in life are stored in different sites of the brain. In addition, Pliatsikas, Moschopoulou, and Saddy (2015), as well as Mecchelli et al. (2004), focus on the perceived improvements on grey and white matter for bilinguals thus locating their knowledge within the biological sphere. Such an emphasis on observing underlying neurological mechanisms may create a view of bilingualism as a bounded system encapsulated within the biological construct of the brain and its functions

while obscuring the possibility to understand the social and cultural significance given to each language.

Counselling psychology is seen as increasing its engagement with neurological research as a means to create evidence that is non-biased and objective (Rizq, 2010). It has been argued however that there may be a bias towards publishing data solely demonstrating the positive effects of bilingualism (de Bruin, Treccani and Della Sala, 2015; de Bruin & Della Sala, 2016). The neurological and cognitive evidence on which some forms of therapeutic knowledge is based may be considered biased from a positivist perspective and therefore has the potential to promote a skewed understanding of bilingualism. Additionally, observing bilingual processes solely from a neurological or cognitive perspective renders bilingualism an essentialist concept that may be studied through empirical means in order to produce concrete forms of knowledge. Bilingualism is thus divorced from the cultural and political environment in which it occurs. As Heller (2007) states, accounts of bilingualism as a social and ideological practice enable a broader view; a position which as Parker (1998) argues is taken by postmodern forms of therapy.

### **2.3.2 The psychological therapies: the psychodynamic perspective.**

It is possible to locate the majority of literature on therapeutic practice and bilingualism reviewed within the psychodynamic field. Pérez Foster (1996) argues that bilingual clients present “intriguing cases” (p. 100) for the psychodynamic practitioner. Possessing two languages is seen as enabling bilingual clients to express themselves and thus experience themselves in more than one way providing rich material for psychodynamic literature to explore as a result. Such a construction also renders bilingual clients anomalous yet possessing a unique multi-subjectivity making them a client group worthy of focus in the psychodynamic theoretical field.

### ***2.3.2.1 Code-switching as a defence against emotions.***

As Lupton (1998) argues, counselling psychology is positioned as a profession that enables clients to process their emotions and render them safe to experience. Emotions have historically been perceived from an essentialist perspective; biological explanations that view physical sensations as preceding emotional expression have been utilised to transform emotions into categorizable entities. Such a biological understanding allows emotions to be presented as inherently natural and as a result, the basis for emotions has been sought in individual psychology rather than situated socially, historically, culturally and ideologically (Heelas, 2007; Lutz, 2007). This has made it possible to apply emotional knowledge to all individuals irrespective of culture and sociohistorical context (Lupton, 1998) thus potentially disrupting local understandings of emotions.

The psychodynamic school gives great importance to the unconscious dimension of the emotional self. Emotions are seen to be expressed non-verbally for example through dreams and are dealt with through the unconscious use of defence mechanisms (Lupton, 1998). Pérez Foster (1996) argues that the first studies on bilingualism from a psychodynamic perspective are informed by a topographical exploration of the bilingual mind thereby linking it to drives and conscious/unconscious material. Such an understanding has been linked to neurological and cognitive evidence in order to highlight language-related differences expressed through ego functioning. Some of the first authors to explore bilingualism from a psychoanalytic perspective adhere to these views while discussing clinical work.

Freud showed an interest in language choice and the unconscious in his work with Anna O (Freud & Breuer, 1895) while Buxbaum (1949), Greenson (1950) and Krapf (1953) all provide commentary on their work with bilingual clients. These psychoanalysts conclude that the first language contains childhood fantasies and memories thus making it the language

of the id. The second language is constructed as representative of the superego and may thereby be used to transform these infantile drives into new experiences (Amati Mehler, Argentieri & Canestri, 1990). Bilingualism and ego functioning are therefore glossed as rigid, becoming solely representative of concealed personality functions. Such accounts fail to account for emotions and emotional expression as located within specific sociocultural understandings (Lupton, 2008). There is little appreciation for the differences individuals speaking different languages may show when expressing emotions.

An interest in bilingualism and psychoanalytic practice resurfaced in the 1970s through the work of Marcos (1976) and Marcos and Urcuyo (1979) who suggest that bilingualism within therapy acts by delaying as well as aiding it. This idea was taken up by various authors (see Rozensky & Gomez, 1983; Altarriba et al., 2009 and Kokoliari & Catanzarite, 2011) who believe clients switch to their first language when facing problems in expressing feelings in the second language with the first language framed as an aid to accessing the representational world. In further elaborations of this topographical understanding of bilingualism and psychodynamic practice, Colin (2013) relegates therapeutic resistance and language choice to the superego thus constructing code-switching as occurring as a result of its rigid demands. In such instances, the verbalization of experience is thought to bring little relief to the client (Rozensky & Gomez, 1983; Canestri & Reppen, 2000). Alternatively, Altarriba (2002) suggests that the second language provides emotional detachment from painful experiences thereby allowing the client to discuss them safely.

The second language is thus dualistically constructed as having an intellectualising function yet also a liberating one where material that is too anxiety-provoking to verbalise in the first language is given a voice. Such understandings implicate bilingualism in therapeutic work as potentially disruptive to the expression of emotional content. Such constructions

render bilingualism problematic; expressional clarity may never be achieved as each language is functionally fixed thus either enhancing or diminishing emotional expression but never both. These formulations of the difficulties bilingualism presents may also be resourced by monolingual ideology that views the co-existence of two or more languages as impossible and necessarily deviant (Bailey, 2007).

As Pérez Foster (1996) argues, such psychoanalytic bodies of knowledge construct bilingualism as part of an unconscious process whereby the two different languages become linked with ego defences and psychic material. Language preference is therefore tied up with unconscious forms of communication and the client plays a limited part in choosing which language to use. This lies in contrast with poststructuralist understandings of emotions as constructed by language and negotiated by varying social, cultural and historical contexts (Goncalves & Machado, 2000). The topographical discourse thereby limits and fossilizes therapeutic understandings of bilingualism and emotional expression as unconscious functions out of the client's control. As Tsitsipis (2007) argues, languages may be imbued with symbolic power yet this goes unexplored in these conceptualisations.

The above accounts frame client's decisions to switch language during therapy as located within the client who uses language purposely, albeit unconsciously, to distance themselves from psychic pain. It thus becomes a linguistic strategy deployed solely for emotional purposes. It may be argued that such a conceptualization of bilingualism within therapeutic practice may be considered limited. Attributing code-switching to the different realms of the client's psychic functioning may render the concepts rooted in realist truth claims. Such a categorization may, therefore, be understood as devoid of a more nuanced consideration of the sociocultural constitution of both language and emotions. It lacks a reading of bilingual communication as a form of social practice embedded within wider

discourses that may create linguistic hierarchies (Heller, 2007). The power differentials that are socially and institutionally embedded within each language thus go unaccounted for.

The simplistic splitting of the first and second language into different functions is disputed by Byford (2015) who uses case studies to argue that such a dual categorisation may not allow for a more complex appreciation of the varying dynamics that different languages may facilitate in client work. She argues that bilingual therapists provide information to their bilingual clients through the very fact that they can operate in two languages. Such information is framed as allowing for issues such as difference, envy, intergenerational trauma, and boundaries to emerge quicker within the therapeutic work. The client's language choice thereby allows the therapist to occupy multiple positions within the transference enhancing collaborative therapeutic reflection as a result. This account privileges the mixing of languages as a creative opportunity (Bailey, 2007) to allow a variety of material to emerge and be worked through in therapy thereby locating such switches within the co-constructed therapeutic exchange. This postmodern view of code-switching as embedded within social interactions (Heller, 2007) is further explored in the literature on code-switching as implicated in the construction of the self as explored next.

#### ***2.3.2.2 Code-switching and the facilitation of the self.***

Contemporary psychodynamic research has placed greater emphasis on the relationship between the multiplicities of self (subjectivities) and bilingualism. Pérez Foster (1996) argues that there exists an “experiential and psychic duality” (p. 99) within bilingual subjects. This may have implications for how the self relates to language with different aspects of the self, structured around each one (Garrett, 2007).

The context in which each language was learnt e.g. through migration or from a caretaker is formulated as leading to an encapsulation of these internal and external relations. A different sense of being and experiencing the self and other thus becomes associated with each language spoken (Tummala-Narra, 2016). Tehrani and Vaughan (2009) use a case study to illustrate this idea. They describe how the different languages spoken by a bilingual client were mutually understood as representative of differing experiences and were enlisted during therapy in order to aid the client's healing process. Contrary to this therapeutic use of languages, Sciarra and Ponterotto (1991) propose that resistance to exploring different aspects of the self is thought to be implicated in client's choice to switch language. Such accounts, therefore, allow for a consideration of how the client may use languages to construct experiences differently or to position themselves in various ways. As a result of this therapeutic and theoretical understanding, code-switching is framed as an interactional practice (Heller, 2007) embedded within the specific context of therapy.

Different languages have also been linked to a different sense of self as expressed in various cultural contexts. For Imberti (2007) the second language may come to represent the loss of traditions and cultural ties to a different life. She argues that "the foreign tongue can conceal the true self" (p. 70) as it may provide a superficial description of emotions. Gaining fluency in a second language may be an intellectual process yet may also offer an avenue for self-expression that was suppressed in the first language due to particular social constraints. Although the idea of the "true self" may be considered realist, Imberti allows space for the creative client who utilises the second language to explore a different subjectivity that was inhibited in the first language due to cultural norms.

Such accounts of bilingualism facilitate a consideration of how different languages may be used as a resource to construct different identities and relationships with others based



on the social contexts in which these are formed and used. It may be suggested that the bilingual client is depicted as agentic (Brown, 2007). The client's decision to mix languages is no longer seen as an entirely unconscious process which they have no control over but as a creative means to form different subjectivities depending on the language they used.

### **2.3.3 Cognitive behavioural therapy.**

Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) may be described as a form of therapy that looks at the relationship between behaviour, thoughts and feelings as well as the meanings attributed to these. Westbrook, Kennerly and Kirk (2007) argue that it is a form of therapy that prides itself on its ability to offer evidence-based treatment developed through scientific research. As Sanders (2010) highlights, CBT is recommended in the NICE guidelines as the appropriate treatment for issues such as depression thus making it a popular treatment. It may, therefore, be of interest to counselling psychologists to consider how CBT practitioners have contributed to the discursive construction of bilingualism in therapy.

Using Spanish-English bilinguals within the USA as a focus, Villalba Jr (2007) calls on all professionals involved in the therapeutic professions to develop culture-specific competencies when working with Latino/a youths. Being multilingual or bilingual is seen as a means of accessing better employment and widening cultural skills. This argument is used to promote the therapeutic use of CBT as a means to elicit the benefits of bilingualism for this particular client group. Villalba Jr further argues that CBT may successfully persuade clients who express a desire to stop speaking Spanish to reassess their decision when faced with global employment opportunities for bilingual individuals. This understanding of bilingualism as an economic resource dictated by global demand positions this understanding within a postnational discourse (Pujolar, 2007). In order to facilitate a therapeutic discussion around the perceived benefits of bilingualism, Villalba Jr proposes the use of CBT techniques

and tools such as journals to enhance beliefs around the benefits of being bilingual while also developing ways of coping with the perceived negative associations of being bilingual.

These therapeutic suggestions discursively construct bilingualism as a benefit for the client and problematic when rejected. The therapist is positioned as an expert practitioner who promotes bilingualism as a means to enhance the client's prospects within the globalized world thereby pushing their agenda. Such a subject position may lack respect for the client's autonomy and expertise (Mearns & Thorne, 2007) which is at the basis of counselling psychology's humanistic epistemology. Furthermore, this account also proposes resistance to bilingualism as an individual activity rather than a wider, cultural one. Helmer (2013) argues that resistance to speaking or learning a heritage language may reflect unequal institutional power relationships whereby the heritage language, culture, or social identities are denigrated, marginalized, or misjudged within the wider monolingual community. The broader implications of being bilingual may, therefore, remain obscured in therapeutic practice and the client risks being considered as divorced from the context in which they operate.

#### **2.3.4 Humanistic perspectives.**

As discussed in Chapter One, humanism is credited with being at the base of counselling psychology's epistemological stance (Strawbridge & Woolfe, 2010). As DuPlock (2010) notes, humanistic therapies such as person-centred therapy, are also based on humanism. Person-centred therapy (PCT) places an emphasis on the here-and-now aspects of the client's experience while focussing on empathy, unconditional positive regard and congruence as necessary for therapy (Rogers, 1957). It is therefore understood that understandings of bilingualism, from a PCT perspective, may be important for counselling psychologists to engage with.

Bilingual practitioners working from a person-centred perspective may be better positioned to provide empathy and authenticity to their clients due to their ability to communicate in the client's preferred language (Ivers et al., 2013). Ramos-Sánchez (2007) suggests that European-American counsellors, who switch to Spanish with Mexican-American bilingual clients, are rated positively by their clients. These counsellors were seen as more empathic due to their perceived willingness to enter the client's world through language. Kennedy (2015) also reports that Welsh clients described a stronger sense of acceptance when counselled in Welsh. Apart from linguistic understandings, there was a cultural commonality that was tacitly acknowledged. She further constructs the recognition of bilingualism as a therapeutic tool to communicate Roger's (1957) core conditions. Such accounts, therefore, render language crucial to the person-centred approach; the person-centred counselling psychologist is positioned as only able to fully embrace the client if they are able to allow both languages into the room.

In contrast, the frustration bilingual clients may experience at not finding adequate translations for words when working with monolingual therapists is seen to render PCT an activity fraught with difficulties (Kennedy, 2015). The client is positioned as stuck and the therapist as unable to accommodate the client's feelings as they arise within the session, a skill which as Mearns and Thorne (2007) state, is crucial in person-centred therapy. Kennedy (2015) suggests an alternative framing of this situation by proposing that this sense of frustration may be opened up and explored. The therapist is thus able to position themselves as strengthened in overcoming these constraints and is able to use the client's bilingualism as a therapeutic tool in processing emotions.

The above recommendations offer an understanding of bilingualism as contributing to therapeutic practice. Both bilingual and monolingual therapeutic practitioners working from a

PCT orientation are positioned as skilled and enabled to use various aspects of the bilingual client's presentation within therapy. These proposals, however, may be seen as devoid of a regard for the relations of power imbued within the construction of bilingualism and the various ensuing linguistic hierarchies (Heller, 2007). They may therefore not fully consider the sociocultural and sociohistorical construction of linguistic diversity as replayed within the therapeutic relationship.

### **2.3.5 Systemic therapy.**

Bilingualism may be experienced as more complex when working with families or couples (de Zulueta, 1990). Alilovic and Yassine (2010) maintain that although counselling psychologists traditionally work with individuals, they may be well-positioned to work with families thereby making the implications of working with bilingual families also relevant to this thesis.

The systemic approach allows for a view that reality is not a homogenous experience; meaning is created through interactions between culture, relationships, and language. As deZulueta (1990) argues, paying attention to the cultural connotations associated with each language, while exploring them with the family, is considered an important therapeutic task for practitioners working systemically. Softas-Nall, Cardona and Barritt (2015) further propose that an awareness of the power imbalance created when monolingual English-speaking therapists work with families whose primary language may not be English, and with couples when only one partner's first language is English, is highly important.

The therapeutic considerations offered point towards an understanding of bilingualism as power-laden, interactional as well as socially, historically, and culturally constituted. This construction may allow therapeutic practitioners to position themselves as capable of

appreciating the power dynamics that may be embedded in languages replayed within therapy. This awareness enables counselling psychologists to ensure that they are mindful of replicating power inequalities as represented by language within their client work.

### **2.3.6 Psychological assessments and tests.**

Psychometric testing is not typically included in many counselling psychology training courses. Van Scoyoc (2010) disputes this practice by arguing that counselling psychologists may wish to engage with psychological assessments and tests as a means to collaboratively enable clients to identify and think about difficult experiences. Counselling psychologists may, therefore, be asked to engage with such forms of knowledge when working with bilingual clients making them relevant to consider.

Projective tests administered to bilinguals under experimental conditions are thought to have shown that results may be dependent on the language used during the test. It is proposed that the participant may project different aspects of their personality (Findling, 1964); remember particular experiences and experience different emotions (Ervin-Tripp, 1964) based upon the language being used. Ervin-Tripp notes, however, that such tests do not prove a link between language use and inner experience as participants may also act differently depending on the cultural expectations associated with each language thereby highlighting the relationship between culture and language.

Cross-cultural, psychological testing has long been problematized. It has been argued that apart from psychological assessments and tests not accounting for cultural differences, a lack of awareness of linguistic differences may lead to bilingual clients being pathologized. Cofresi and Gorman (2004) suggest that psychological practitioners consider the level of fluency in both languages and levels of comprehension in order to ensure that tests are carried

out in the language the client feels most comfortable speaking. They also argue that the content validity of a test may be affected in the assessment of bilingual clients as tests containing validity in the English language may not maintain it when translated.

Variations in validity have led researchers such as Wallis (2004) to argue that psychometric testing may be an inherently problematic procedure. By turning constructs such as “personality” and “depression” into objects that can be subjected to empirical testing, realist forms of knowledge are established as truths. These truth claims then allow labels to be attached to clients who these tests serve to classify (Foucault, 1978; Rose, 1985; Gergen, 1990). The use of psychometric tests with bilingual clients further serves to highlight how psychometric tests are constructed through language within specific cultures with constructs used that may not be easily communicated in other languages. Yet, these may be applied to individuals from different cultures thus making their truth claims potentially oppressive towards bilingual clients.

### **2.3.7 Supervision.**

It may be argued that specific supervisory awareness around bilingual issues in therapeutic work is needed (Fuentes, 2004). Woolfe and Tholstrup (2010) further argue that supervision is considered mandatory to all counselling psychologists throughout their careers making it central to practice. A critical discussion of understandings of supervision and bilingualism will thus be considered in this section.

Batten (1990) identifies supervision as a potentially troublesome area for supervisees and supervisors who do not share the same first language. She warns that supervisors must be able to “*tolerate frustration*” (p. 138, emphasis author’s own) due to the losses that occur during the translation process but also as a result of cultural differences around

communication styles. Nguyen (2013) meanwhile proposes that supervisors of bilingual therapists working with same language clients must be extra vigilant of over-identification processes that might be created between the therapeutic dyad. These suggestions, therefore, frame bilingualism within supervision as needing an extra layer of awareness of the relational dynamics occurring between the supervisor and supervisee that may not be needed when working with monolingual supervisees

While drawing attention to bilingualism as a cultural practice, the special emphasis placed, identifies bilingual therapists as requiring added attention. In order to mediate the difficulties created by this situation, Fuertes (2004) recommends that supervision is offered in the same language used during counselling in order to mirror the interactions and processes that took place. Linguistic differences are therefore framed as best dealt with through linguistic sameness. Such a solution perhaps forecloses the opportunity for issues around linguistic diversity to be discussed. It also assumes that because the same language is being used, issues of diversity between supervisor and supervisee are eliminated (Davies, 1999) thereby ignoring other intersectional issues.

## **2.4 Sociohistorical and sociocultural perspectives**

Counselling psychology has been criticised for placing a focus on the individual without considering the impact of social contexts and structures (Thatcher & Manktelow, 2007; Kagan, Tindall, & Robinson, 2010). As Heller (2007) argues language, society and culture are intertwined with language traditionally being configured in such a way as to demarcate and maintain social control over citizens. This section provides an account of the sociocultural and sociohistorical perspectives of bilingualism in order to consider the impact various social forces have had on constructions of the category of bilingualism in therapy.

Attention is particularly paid to postcolonial understandings of bilingualism while offering a specific consideration of the Maltese context.

#### **2.4.1 Postcolonialism, bilingualism and counselling psychology.**

Counselling psychology's roots in a Western, Eurocentric, individualistic and economically based mode of thought have endowed psychological practices with the power to become colonising practices when dealing with linguistic difference (Parker, 1997). Lutz (2007) argues that the Euro-American way of looking at emotions has also served to create schemas for what is considered mental illness for culturally different people which may have ramifications for the way they are treated by professionals. Psychological discourse may, therefore, have the power to influence how subjects from varying contexts order and make sense of their experiences.

English has been historically symbolised as the “language of colonizers” (Lyngra, 2011, p.201). This may make English a language of opportunity but also one of oppression when considered against other languages traditionally positioned as inferior. Counselling psychologists working with bilingual clients are therefore encouraged to be aware of this dynamic in order to be able to address any inequalities within the room. Bowker and Richards (2010) also suggest that languages have political implications with non-majority languages representing “otherness”. They further maintain that this sense of being rendered other may cause clients to position themselves as integrated by choosing to have therapy in English. Such a choice is therefore seen as reflecting a discourse of English as a language of prestige which creates a power imbalance when considered against other languages.

Using the Maori language in New Zealand as an example, Cornforth (2001) argues that Maori allows for a different construction of subjectivity than what is enabled through



English. The notion of the “ego” is not thought to resonate with Maori culture thus potentially making it a psychologically irrelevant concept when working therapeutically within this context. Such an account highlights the need for counselling psychologists to be aware of the power psychological discourse has, in order to avoid colonising clients who may express themselves in different ways. Bilingualism may hence go beyond linguistic difference by reflecting cultural power through the perpetuation of bodies of knowledge through discourse (Foucault, 1982) resourced by Western ideals. The power of the Western discourse on which counselling psychology is based may act through sites, such as the counselling relationship, to transform and coerce people into defining themselves using psychological terms that may be alien to them.

Furthermore, Polanco (2010) states that languages may offer “multisubjectivities” (p. 12) to bilinguals, showing that differing languages may offer a wealth of subject positions from which to operate. Burck (2011) proposes that the construction of the bilingual self as related to language may be influenced by the power relationships between the two languages, most notably within accounts by individuals from postcolonial contexts. In an account given by one participant from Zimbabwe, Burck notes his inadvertent self-positioning as a colonized subject through his strong desire to become fluent in English. She also notes that several participants describe themselves as feeling more polite when recounting their sense of self when using English; an understanding which may draw from a stereotyped discourse of English. A consideration of the way in which each language offers different subject positions and leads to varying constructions of the self as a result of the power implications of each language may be considered important to bear in mind when working therapeutically with bilingual clients.

#### **2.4.2 Bilingual practices in Malta: implications for therapeutic practice.**

There seems to be a lack of literature on the relationship between counselling psychology in Malta and the use of Maltese and English concurrently or separately. Reviewing available educational literature may aid to highlight current knowledge surrounding Maltese-English use within the wider context. Martin-Jones (2007) argues that a critique of educational accounts may draw attention to how discourses surrounding bilingualism within society may be produced or reproduced within educational settings potentially making them relevant to the Maltese therapeutic context. Just as the use of language within the classroom cannot be separated from external social contexts (Camilleri Grima, 2013b), psychological forms of knowledge must also be considered within the wider social, cultural and historical sphere in which they are produced (Parker, 1998). It may, therefore, be considered pertinent to understand how constructions of bilingualism in the Maltese, educational setting are resourced by wider contexts that may also resource discourses deployed within other forms of knowledge such as counselling psychology.

English is considered to be the dominant language of education in Malta and is used widely in tertiary education. Globalising discourses surrounding the need for English within educational settings construct it as a valued resource leading to prosperity (Martin-Jones, 2007). This resonates with the Maltese context where Camilleri Grima (2013b) suggests that parental perceptions of bilingualism within the Maltese classroom are resourced by this discourse. English is hence perceived as vital due to its international status and as representative of a good standard of education within the Maltese context; an understanding also present in Ghana (Edu-Bandoh & Otchere, 2012). In contrast, a nationalist discourse is used by parents to argue for the need for Maltese to be learnt in schools with parents suggesting it is necessary due to its ties to national identity and for everyday communication

(Camilleri Grima, 2013b). English and Maltese are thus framed as having separate but necessary and complimentary roles.

Language may also be a tool that invites or prohibits people from social participation. Camilleri Grima, Buttigieg and Xerri (2013) argue that privileging the use of either English or Maltese in the classroom may silence students not fluent in that language thus creating a psycholinguistic barrier. Students may be afraid to participate for fear of making mistakes thereby limiting their engagement in class. Teaching materials and books used may be mostly written in English which as Bonnici (2007) suggests may mean that students who enter into educational establishments at all levels may have to rely on textbooks written in English in spite of potentially differing linguistic preferences. Bonnici further argues that specialist technical fields rarely have a Maltese vocabulary and automatically rely on English to fill this function. As Calleja (2014) maintains, this has led to a situation where medical jargon is expressed in English. As a result, patients who do not speak/read English fluently are alienated and excluded from information about their illness and treatment.

The lack of technical language in Maltese may also be applicable to counselling psychology. The limited development of such terms in languages other than English may reflect a global discourse of English as academic language (Hobsbawm, 1996) that thereby privileges the development of fields such as psychology in English. Callus (2009) argues that minority languages such as Maltese may have no choice but to use the language of the other to communicate internationally thereby reflecting a form of subjugation to this discourse. Reports from Spanish-English bilingual therapists working in the USA noted differences in the therapeutic process depending on the language used. Training in English was seen as affecting their confidence in delivering interventions in Spanish with the constant inner translation processes experienced as slowing down the therapeutic process (Verdinelli

&Biever, 1990). These salient points illustrate how educational practices may impact therapeutic work through the privileging of one language over another.

It is further proposed that the mixing of Maltese and English (Camilleri Grima, 2013a) may be dependent on the context, interlocutors, and topic of discussion. Camilleri (1996) highlights how in the classroom, teachers may code-switch from English to Maltese in order to explain English terms, encourage student participation and establish rapport. Such accounts construct the mixing of Maltese and English as a strategic form of action and are resourced by postmodern views of heteroglossic forms of communication as contextually strategic (Bailey, 2007). Furthermore, Camilleri (1996) suggests that code-switching in Malta is a discursive practice that is resourced by social and historical understandings. Thus, teachers may choose to use a sufficient amount of English and Maltese as to appear “educated” whilst maintaining a Maltese identity. Caruana (2007) further highlights how teachers demonstrate a positive attitude towards the use of Maltese in the classroom. These code-switching practices may be relevant to an understanding of bilingualism within Maltese therapeutic practice as a means to highlight how the use of English and Maltese is culturally constructed.

Other cultural ideas about bilingualism in Malta as linked to social class (Baldacchino, 2014) have highlighted understandings of Maltese and English as containing different levels of prestige (Fergusson, 1964; Fishman, 1968). These understandings take a structural perspective and may be linked to Bourdieu’s (1991) notion of linguistic capital that posits different forms of language as containing different levels of cultural strength and status within society. Individuals in Malta have often been classified as mainly Maltese or English-speaking with Maltese traditionally acting as the language of the working class and English as the language of the educated upper class. The cultural symbolism of Maltese and English

has therefore been constructed along a dichotomy of prestige and devaluation. Cassar (2014) argues that the different values attached are not due to any essential characteristic of the languages themselves but to the cultural meanings imbued within both.

Such understandings of bilingualism implicate it in a class motivated discourse (Heller, 2008). It may be argued that forms of speech considered esteemed or denigrated, become so through dominant linguistic ideologies (Woolard, 1998) as perpetuated by powerful groups who generally privilege their own form of speech over less valued ones (Bailey, 2007). As Mökkönen (2012) suggests, different contexts, including institutional ones, may affect the type of language available to the individual with language, therefore, acting as a means of denoting esteem or stigma. As Brown (2007) adds ideas around forms of speech that are professional may be perpetuated in therapeutic practice. Counselling psychology may perpetuate such knowledge through the expectations it makes of counselling psychologists and their linguistic abilities but also through the way it considers the Maltese-speaking or English-speaking client.

It is proposed that such linguistic ideologies may influence therapeutic practitioners' confidence in delivering therapy in English. Non-native English-speaking trainees using English in clinical practice while training in the United Kingdom reported anxiety at ensuring they produced grammatically correct sentences and felt conscious of their foreign accents when working with British clients (Costa & Dewaele, 2014; Georgiou, 2014). The idea of Standard English as spoken with a standard accent and grammatical rules as the correct form of speech (Lippi-Green, 1997; Woolard, 2007) is thereby implicated in trainees' development as confident professionals.

Furthermore, constructions of correct forms of speech may also be applicable to different speech forms considered lower class. Successful therapy is often seen as

dependent on the client's linguistic ability to engage in the complex language used by the therapist (Ballinger & Wright, 2007). Subjects may be classified according to their talk (Song, 2012) with working class individuals most perceived as using poorer forms of language. In addition, individuals from working class backgrounds are often the ones who must work to master the linguistic styles of the middle and upper classes in order to gain access to different social contexts (Heller, 2008; Snell, 2010; MacRuairc, 2011). Opportunities may hence be opened up or shut down according to the levels of complexity of language register that they are able to engage in (Gee, Allen & Clinton, 2001; Laungani, 2004; Ballinger & Wright, 2007) making the relationship between language and social class fraught with the potential to marginalise individuals speaking in ways not considered correct.

It is suggested that this understanding may create a power imbalance between the ways different linguistic registers, such as Maltese, are treated within therapy. Therapists are alerted to their own discursive abilities, as well as the language registers available to their clients, in order to adapt accordingly (Williams & Irving, 2002; Cofresi & Gorman, 2004). For Leeman, Rabin and Ramon-Mendez (2011) acknowledging marginalization faced by individuals positioned as speaking languages considered less prestigious may empower them to become activists for social change through forms of resistance. The interaction between Maltese, English and social class within therapy may, therefore, be considered as highly pertinent to this research that may serve to highlight how Maltese and English are deployed as sites for potential political and social injustices.

## **2.5 Chapter Overview**

This chapter has offered a critical discussion of the bodies of knowledge informing counselling psychologists working bilingually and with bilingual clients. Literature from psychology and the therapeutic field as well as sociohistorical and sociocultural

understandings have been interrogated in order to highlight the multiplicity of knowledge available and the resulting discursive power relations. In summary, traditional psychodynamic perspectives offer rigid and realist understandings that fail to consider postmodern understandings of bilingualism as a social practice. More recent psychodynamic literature offers a view of bilingualism as constituting different subjectivities for clients thus enabling a more nuanced understanding of bilingualism as socially and culturally located. The CBT literature reviewed took an unquestioning view of bilingualism as a useful tool for bilingual clients on a global and economic level. The therapist was positioned as encouraging this discursive construction of bilingualism as necessary for employment opportunities without considering the political and social reasons bilingual clients may choose to disengage from the use of more than one language. From a person-centred perspective, bilingualism was seen as a therapeutic resource that could aid empathy or emotional exploration thus placing bilingualism as a category as woven within the therapeutic process itself.

Of note is how terms used to refer to the different languages spoken by bilinguals may also be problematized when viewed through a postmodern epistemology yet the psychological and therapeutic literature reviewed often used them uncritically. Both Jaffe (2007) and Burck (2011) argue that linking the “mother tongue” to the role of the mother positions languages as natural and thus draws from emotional arguments of language as linked to nationhood. Zhang (2012) shows how the term “heritage language” is preferred to “mother tongue” within the Chinese-American community. The latter is seen as reflecting a deeper connection to a language that is not English and renders allegiance to the USA as questionable. When considering the term “native speaker”, Holliday (2006) contends that it contains implications of superiority when referring to native English speakers. It may also bind language to an indigenous population located within a particular geographical location

and also lead to the romanticization of populations of languages considered endangered (Patrick, 2007). Terms such as “first language” and “second language” may also reveal hierarchical ideologies by virtue of their numeric positioning. As may be noted, therefore, each term is linked to different power relations. The terms chosen by counselling psychologists to describe their own as well as clients’ relationships to the different languages they speak may therefore not reflect a direct relationship but an opaque and power-laden one that may position themselves and their clients in various ways.

Through the consideration of sociocultural and sociohistorical understandings of bilingualism and counselling psychology, it may be argued that postcolonial contexts such as Malta require their own understandings of bilingualism. Historical readings of Maltese and English as explored throughout section 2.2, as well as section 2.4.2, have highlighted the need to gain a nuanced understanding of how these summarised forms of psychological knowledge regarding bilingualism may interact with local forms of knowledge resourcing therapeutic activities within the Maltese context. To conclude, this chapter sought to draw attention to the varying therapeutic understandings and considerations of bilingualism and how these may impact the practice of counselling psychology. Chapter Three will next provide a description of the method and methodology used to gather and analyse the data.



## **Chapter Three**

### **Methodology and Method**

#### **3.1 Introduction to Chapter Three**

In this chapter, the methodology and method used to address the research question: What are the discursive power relations of Maltese therapeutic practitioner's constructions of the bilingual use of Maltese and English in their therapeutic work? are presented and discussed. Firstly, the epistemological assumptions of this proposed poststructuralist study will be explored and located in the wider methodologies used by psychology and counselling psychology. Secondly, a detailed account of how data were ethically collected and analysed and a description of the participants will be provided. To conclude, arguments relating to how I understood researcher reflexivity and quality issues of relevance to the evaluation of qualitative research will be discussed.

#### **3.2 The epistemological position of Foucauldian discourse analysis in psychology**

Each approach to data analysis is informed by an epistemological position that locates the kind of knowledge it produces, as well as the assumptions it makes about the world, within a wider ideological context (Willig, 2013). As outlined in Chapter One, FDA may be epistemologically located within social constructionist and poststructuralist assumptions that have been adopted by critical psychologists since the 1970s (Gergen 1990, 2001). This means that this study is concerned with providing a discursive understanding of how bilingualism in therapy, in Malta, is constructed within participant accounts. The role of language in creating and maintaining multiple realities is therefore of central concern.

The use of FDA as a means to examine language and its role in socially created categories within psychology has been attributed to a group of Anglo-American

psychologists who recognised psychology's active role in constituting the social domain (Arribas-Ayllon & Walker, 2008). As a result, psychology may be seen to function as an ideological apparatus (Hook, 2008) that creates and maintains systems of domination and oppression through the discourses it circulates and through the activities it engages in, thereby promoting forms of expert knowledge (Rose, 1985). The power of language is thereby reflected in the role it is understood to play in the constitution of discourses that govern the psychological and social realms by allowing or disallowing particular courses of action (Carter, 2013). This study, therefore, applies FDA in order to consider how the socially enabled construction of bilingualism as it applies to therapeutic practice in Malta, is resourced by particular discourses drawn on by participants.

The use of FDA in this study may be further clarified by considering other forms of discourse analysis, namely discursive psychology (DP). DP maintains a specific interest in how the psychological is constructed, attended to, and understood in interaction (Wetherell & Potter, 1995). DP thereby offers a micro-analytic view of the activities occurring within talk (Edley & Wetherell, 1997). In contrast, FDA takes a macro-analytic view of discourse and underlying forms of knowledge in which truth claims are constituted (Hook, 2001). FDA may hence be seen as operating on a macro-level of analysis thereby committing this study to focus on issues of "power, ideological practice and social process" (Edley & Wetherell, 1997, p. 205). Bearing this in mind, this thesis is concerned with the broader historical, cultural and political understandings of bilingualism within the Maltese context as well as the ensuing power relations and how these are replicated within participant accounts.

The epistemological assumptions of FDA uphold an understanding that there is no one fixed version of the world which may be discovered but various versions constructed through the use of language as discourse. Discourses are seen as variously legitimised with

some discourses made dominant while others are silenced through a fluid process of change. As a result, we are all made subject to discourse as implicated in categories of knowledge/power that allow or prohibit what we are able to say, think or do (Foucault, 1980). This understanding enables a conceptualisation of power as circulating throughout society yet does not over-simplify it as a top-down phenomenon (Dickerson, 2012). As Carter (2013) argues, all subjects within society have access to power yet this does not imply that social inequalities do not exist; rather these inequalities are seen to shift and change according to the discourses that produce them. As Hook (2007) highlights, FDA's interest lies in the "dynamic interchange between capillary and modern state forms of power" (p. 606) thus taking a critical interest in the practices that govern the everyday life of the subject.

This study aims to use FDA to highlight how varying discourses surrounding bilingualism that have been adopted by counselling psychology may be rendered problematic within participant accounts. Furthermore, identifying these discourses through FDA will enable an elucidation of how these are also resourced by sociocultural and sociohistorical understandings particular to the Maltese context. FDA offers the opportunity to reframe discursive constructions of bilingualism from a Maltese therapeutic perspective and analyse how truth claims made are kept in place through discourses assumed to be true and correct (Parker, 1992). In addition, Foucault's interest in forms of resistance to dominant forms of discourse allows for counselling psychologists to question and critique the truth claims they perpetuate (McDonald & O'Callaghan, 2008). Identifying these points of resistance would hence also aid in elaborating what alternative discourses circulate within participant accounts in order to open up unconventional courses of action.

Although it is acknowledged that Foucault (1994) did not wish to prescribe a mode of doing research, stating "I take care not to dictate how things should be" (p. 288), guidelines

for carrying out research informed by FDA have been offered by various authors ( see Parker, 1992; Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008 and Willig, 2013). The method used to guide this study may be thought of as an approach rather than as a strict procedure thus making it compatible with a poststructuralist stance (McLeod, 2011). However, understandings of FDA offered by these authors have been particularly informative as briefly outlined below.

As discussed in Chapter Two, Arribas-Ayllon and Walkerdine (2008) recommend that each study begins with a historical inquiry into the object being studied. In this case, a genealogically-informed review of bilingualism within the Maltese therapeutic setting, as well as an overview of the psychological literature, was provided in order to identify and contextualise circulating forms of knowledge (see Chapter Two). Willig's (2013) and Parker's (1992) recommendations for employing FDA were also found to be particularly useful and will be discussed further in Section 3.4.

As knowledge is understood as constructed, Willig (2013) argues that the researcher in FDA is not positioned as discovering what lies beneath the phenomenon being studied, but actively "authors" it (p. 139). The implication of this is that reflexivity of one's own subjectivity as the researcher must be considered and will be outlined in Section 3.5. This process enables the data presented to be rendered problematic and further scrutinised. As is in keeping with a poststructuralist epistemology, it is recognised that while this study offers one understanding of the data produced, these may also be read in multiple and plural ways.

The use of FDA within this qualitative psychological study further allows the findings produced to be considered as contextually relevant and theoretically driven thereby enhancing understandings of how bilingualism is a discursively constructed and maintained object resourced by broader discourse and ideology (Macleod & Bhatia, 2008). It is additionally outlined that FDA may allow for a critical reflexivity of the knowledge produced

about bilingualism within counselling psychology and therapeutic practice as well as the ensuing implications for client work. It may, therefore, be concluded that FDA is a suitable qualitative approach to address the research question: What are the discursive power relations of Maltese therapeutic practitioner's constructions of the bilingual use of Maltese and English in their therapeutic work?

### **3.3 Method and Research design**

The kinds of resources used in FDA are unlimited meaning that FDA research does not necessarily limit itself to the spoken word (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine; 2008). As Burr (2003) and Willig (2013) suggest, however, written texts such as transcribed interviews are considered a useful source for producing research findings. Arribas-Ayllon and Walkerdine (2008) further propose that interviews may be understood as a means of retrieving the practices of particular groups as well as the discourses that resource their talk. For the purpose of this study, therefore, nine semi-structured interviews were carried out with Maltese therapeutic practitioners in order to gain access to discursive constructions concerned with the bilingual use of Maltese and English in the Maltese therapeutic context.

It is acknowledged that the context of these research interviews about professional practice, carried out by a trainee counselling psychologist training in the UK, may have influenced what participants chose to talk about. It is possible that my privilege as researcher, especially bearing in mind the postcolonial slant of this thesis (Macleod & Bhatia, 2008), may have influenced the research process by implicitly creating distinct permissions or prohibitions about what participants were able to say.

### **3.3.1 Ethical issues addressed.**

This study followed the BPS (2009) code of ethics for counselling psychologists engaging in research. As Howitt (2013) suggests, research interviews may lead to the creation of an intimate relationship between researcher and participant as interviewees are often asked to disclose personal information. It is therefore understood that the researcher must be mindful and actively attend to the power relationship that is created between researcher and participant (Morrow, 2005). The duty to safeguard participants makes an awareness of ethical issues highly relevant at all stages of research. Although this study focussed on the professional practices participants engaged in and did not aim to elicit highly distressing material, the following pre-emptive measures (Willig, 2013) were taken.

Before recruiting participants, ethical approval was sought and granted by the University of Roehampton Ethics Board in July 2014 (Reference number: PSYC14/135). An information sheet (Appendix A) containing a description of the study was prepared in order to recruit participants. This sheet outlined the purpose of the study and what participation would require. A consent form (Appendix B) was given to the participants before the interview began. This contained a brief outline of the study, how confidentiality and anonymity would be maintained as well as a description of how the material would be stored thus making issues of accountability and responsibility clear prior to the interview process (Freshwater, 2007). At the end of the interview, a debrief form (Appendix C) was signed by both the researcher and participants. This form included confirmation that the interview was carried out in an ethical manner and assurance that confidentiality would be maintained. The researcher's details were included together with contact details for the Director of Studies and Head of Department at the University of Roehampton. This was done in order to ensure that

participants could access support following participation if needed. The telephone number of a local helpline was also included to facilitate the access of immediate support.

In order to ensure confidentiality, data were transferred in encrypted form onto a password-protected USB stick and stored separately from any identifying information such as signed consent and debrief forms. Pseudonyms have been used throughout the study and any other identifiable information such as workplace has been omitted from any quotes used in the next chapter to ensure that each participant's anonymity is fully maintained.

### **3.3.2 Participants: recruitment and inclusion criteria.**

A snowballing recruitment method was used in order to recruit participants. A letter of invitation (Appendix A) was sent to prospective participants via the Maltese Chamber of Psychologists (MCP) (formerly known as the Maltese Psychological Association), Maltese Association for Counsellors and Psychotherapists (MACP) as well as practitioners known professionally to the researcher. The sample may thus be considered opportunistic as the participants were self-selected volunteers.

In order to ensure that sufficient data were gathered within the limited research time frame and bearing in mind Malta's smaller pool of counselling psychologists when compared to the UK, participation was opened up to qualified counselling psychologists as well as qualified clinical psychologists, counsellors, and psychotherapists from differing orientations. It was understood that members from these differing professions would also be able to offer relevant understandings of issues pertaining to Maltese-English bilingualism within their practice due to the waning differences between these various therapeutic identities (Norcross, 2000). The participant sample hence included three integrative counselling psychologists, three counsellors with one also working as a CBT therapist, and three integrative clinical

psychologists, two of whom also listed systemic therapy as a specialist orientation.

Integrative is understood as mainly including training in the following schools: person-centred, psychodynamic and CBT.

The minimum qualification for participation needed was at diploma level with all participants being qualified by various public and private institutes both locally and abroad. No limitations on years of experience or setting in which therapeutic practitioners practiced were placed. Participants included a mix of practitioners who had experience working in public services as well as private practice. Bearing in mind the discourse analytic stance of this study, it was decided that each participant, irrelevant of current working context, could offer equally valuable data. Considering Malta's pluralistic linguistic situation (Vella, 2013) participants were not required to consider themselves as equally Maltese and English-speaking but to have had experience working in both Maltese and English within the Maltese therapeutic context.

### **3.3.3 Key demographics of participants recruited.**

The following table (Table 1) contains information on the qualifications, gender, linguistic identity and country where the participants qualified as well as years of experience. Such data may enable a contextual understanding of participant's constructions of bilingualism within their professional practice.



<b>Participant Pseudonyms</b>	<b>Professional Qualification</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Linguistic identity</b>	<b>Location of therapeutic training</b>	<b>Years of experience</b>
Louis	-Integrative counsellor - Cognitive-behavioural therapist	Male	-Maltese -English	-Malta -UK	3
Carla	-Integrative and humanistic counsellor	Female	-English	Malta	3
Sandra	-Clinical Psychologist -Systemic therapist	Female	-Maltese/ Dialect -English	Malta	1
Lisa	-Clinical psychologist	Female	-Maltese -English	Malta	1
Dominic	-Counselling psychologist	Male	-Bilingual	Canada	10
Vanessa	-Clinical psychologist -Systemic therapist	Female	-Bilingual spoke English as a child	Malta	1
Daniel	Counsellor	Male	-Multilingual	Malta	7
Caroline	Counselling psychologist	Female	-Bilingual	U.K.	1
Anna	Counselling psychologist	Female	-Bilingual	Malta	1

Table 1: Summary of participant information.

### 3.3.4 Procedure for conducting interviews.

All interviews were held within a six week period. Collecting data within such a specific time enabled knowledge produced from these accounts to be located within a particular sociohistorical space (Parker, 1992). All interviews were carried out face to face at a mutually agreed location and lasted no longer than one hour. Each interview was recorded in order to ensure that data could be accessed at a later stage. A semi-structured interview schedule was used to guide each interview. This enabled the interviews to remain focused but also allowed for data to be interrogated as it emerged thus making it a fluid process (Howitt, 2013). All interviews were held in English as this is the language in which this thesis is being presented. Participants were however invited to switch to Maltese at their own discretion. It was understood that any linguistic changes could enrich the data analysis process (Welsh & Piekkari, 2006) by potentially directly highlighting issues related to bilingualism and therapy.

#### ***3.3.4.1 Pilot Interview.***

A pilot interview was carried out in order to ensure that the questions asked were sufficient to inform the proposed data analysis. Following transcription and an in-depth reading of the transcript, it was decided that it offered enough analytically valuable content to be included in this study. A follow-up session with the participant was held in order to discuss the interview process. The questions asked were found to allow for the provision of expansive answers yet it was recognised that an exploration of clinical examples engendered a particularly in-depth reflection on bilingualism in therapeutic work. This was kept in mind during the remaining interviews and participants were asked to discuss clinical examples whenever relevant. This session also highlighted the utility of asking participants how they identified linguistically at the beginning of the interview. This would allow for a possible contextualisation of participant background as relevant to the data analysis (see Table 1).

#### ***3.3.4.2 Interview schedule.***

The interview schedule was partly informed by the literature (Chapter Two). For example Georgiou (2014) and Costa and Deaweles (2014) research into bilingual practitioners and their perceptions of being trained in English was useful to consider in its applicability to the Maltese context. Cornforth's (2001) questioning of Western psychological terms as applied to Maori clients was also particularly relevant. The questions asked aimed to elicit participants' talk on their understandings and therapeutic practices particularly in relation to their use of either Maltese or English or both. The main questions asked were:

1. Could you talk to me about your training and work experience?

2. What differences (if any) do you experience when working with English-speaking clients or Maltese-speaking clients?
3. Do you perceive Maltese/English as an adequate language for use in therapy? Any examples?
4. What benefits and constraints do you experience when working in Maltese or English?
5. What are the implications for practice, of training in English and using Anglo-American literature when working in the Maltese context?

For the full interview schedule please see Appendix D.

#### ***3.3.4.3 Interview transcription.***

As noted in section 3. 2, FDA concerns itself with the macro-textual structures of talk. As Walton (2007) proposes, a less detailed transcript is therefore required than for a method such as conversational analysis or discursive psychology that place greater emphasis on the micro-textual intricacies of discourse. Nevertheless, the transcripts were transcribed verbatim to offer as close a representation of the interview as possible. Please see page 8 of this thesis for an outline of the transcription conventions used.

### **3.4 Data analysis – analytic steps applied**

From an iterative reading of the nine transcripts generated, the analytic of interest was the diverse power-related discourses that participants drew on to resource their constructions of bilingualism. These were considered a finding of significance to the audience of counselling psychologists who have an interest in considering bilingualism within therapeutic practice.

For close interrogation of the data as a means to identify discourses of relevance to answering the research question, Willig's (2013) six steps for analysing data from a Foucauldian lens were applied to the data as described below.

**Stage 1:** Discursive constructions. During this stage, the data were read several times in order to identify the way in which the use of Maltese and English in therapy was being constructed as a discursive object. Both obvious instances of talk relating to the discursive object as well as hidden ones were looked at. This meant that I highlighted any obvious references to the use of Maltese and English as well as less direct ones. This enabled me to consider both overt constructions and subtle ones. This stage allowed me to notice that participants often spoke of English and Maltese as occupying different roles in therapeutic practice.

**Stage 2:** Discourses. Following the selection of text from the transcripts, differences between the discourses resourcing participants' constructions were outlined. This enabled them to be located within wider discourses such as a professional discourse that enabled English to be seen as the language best used to convey psychological knowledge.

**Stage 3:** Action orientation. During this stage, I focussed on what the discourses being drawn upon achieved; what possibilities for action were they opening up or shutting down through their deployment? I noticed that the way Maltese and English were at times rigidly assigned to different categories limited their use outside of these roles thus indicating the potential power relations between them as created through discourse.

**Stage 4:** Positionings. This part of the analysis looked at what subject positions participants took up within the discourse they used. For example, I noticed that participants often positioned themselves as ethical practitioners adapting their language use to meet the needs of their clients. Commonalities in positioning indicated that participants drew on shared

discourses (Moore & Seu, 2010) and this, therefore, enabled a clearer identification of discourses in participant accounts.

**Stage 5:** Practice. At this point in the data analysis, the focus turned to looking at what was enabled or constrained in constructing bilingualism within therapeutic practice in a particular way and in taking certain subject positions. The question “What can be said and done?” was used to lead this stage of the analysis. I observed that previous essentialist understandings of English as the language of professional psychology led to the marginalisation of Maltese with practitioners feeling empowered by English but limited by Maltese.

**Stage 6:** Subjectivity. Here the focus was on what could be felt, thought and experienced from taking up these subject positions. I noticed that participants generally created forms of subjectivity according to the discursive constructions of both Maltese and English with both enabling different aspects of the participants’ therapeutic identities.

Parker (1992) suggests adding further steps to the analysis such as looking at the historical origins of discourse, their link to institutions, power, and ideology. Considering the postcolonial slant of this research, these steps were also added to the analysis by looking at the discourses outlined, noticing instances of power reproduced within them as well as counter-discourses that provided opportunities for resistance and how these were potentially resourced by forms of linguistic ideology. The way in which discourses replicated or undermined institutional practices such as training courses and how these may propagate or shift constructions around the use of Maltese and English in therapy was also considered.

While analysing the data, it was recognised that Foucault’s work on power/knowledge and the role of discourse in replicating or undermining the power/knowledge nexus (Foucault, 1977) was particularly relevant to this thesis. Therefore, by considering this

understanding of the data and bearing in mind the research question: What are the discursive power relations of Maltese therapeutic practitioner's constructions of the bilingual use of Maltese and English in their therapeutic work? a decision was made to focus the analysis on the emergent discourses as well as their role in resourcing the discursive constructions offered by participants. Stages 1, 2 and 3 of Willig's (2013) stages were hence particularly focussed on to further guide the data analysis. This is not to imply that the data did not supply opportunities for the analysis of subject positioning, practice, and subjectivities; as is in keeping with Willig's (2013) method, some reflections on possibilities for action and subjectivity as linked to the outlined discourses were also noted as appropriate to the data, though not the main focus of this analysis. From this analysis, it emerged that three main discourses resourced participants' accounts: "English: a professional discourse", "Maltese: a cultural discourse" and "Maltese-English bilingualism: a discourse of deviance". These will be further discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

### **3.5 Researcher reflexivity**

Reflexivity is considered important for counselling psychologists to consider when engaging in research (Donati, 2016). The researcher may be considered a principle figure within the research process influencing it at various levels; it is the researcher who chooses the research topic, collects, and interprets data. From a poststructuralist perspective, data collection is seen as a co-constituted process: a different researcher interviewing the same participants using the same questions might elicit different answers. As a result of this intersubjective understanding, it may be considered important for researchers to reflect on how they have been implicated in the co-creation of their research findings. As Finlay (2003) argues, reflexivity may be defined as a well-thought, self-awareness; furthermore, it offers an opportunity to transform subjectivity in research from "a problem to an opportunity" (p. 531).

As Parker (1992) further elaborates, reflexivity may be thought of as a process of drawing on wider discourses. It is thereby understood that researchers using FDA may reflect on their research findings by situating them within particular social, cultural and personal discourses within which they were produced (Madill, Jordan & Shirley, 2000). This implies that reflexivity is not a transparent means to offer realist understandings of bias within research (Gough, 2003). Instead, it may be thought of as a vehicle that enables the researcher to identify how they too subscribe to particular truth claims which may change over time. Elaborating reflexivity also allows the reader to engage with this process. The influences presented in the upcoming section may hence be considered as just one way of understanding how I have influenced my data analysis regarding the discursive power relations between the categories of Maltese-English bilingualism within the Maltese therapeutic setting; other discursive positions are also possible.

Firstly, I outline my own epistemological stance before moving on to outline relevant personal experiences. From a methodological perspective, I find social constructionism a useful tool in highlighting how discourse shapes the way we are able to inhabit the world and how power works throughout society. However, in order to avoid adopting an extremist position that claims that reality is solely constituted in and through discourse, I subscribe to a critical realist epistemology. This means that I recognise that reality exists independent of discourse but that discourse is implicated in the shaping and framing of reality according to constraints present in the material world (Parker, 1992).

From a young age, I have always had to negotiate the multiple meanings that English and Maltese seem to represent in Malta. I was raised to be bilingual, my parents wishing me to be able to communicate using both Maltese and English. In spite of my bilingual upbringing, I was distinctly aware that individuals were often classified as either Maltese-

speaking or English-speaking with little room for other forms of self-identification. I noticed that what may be considered a dividing practice (Chomsky & Foucault, 2006) resonated in various ways within various contexts. While at school I noticed that some students held a hostile attitude towards Maltese which I experienced as distressing due to my mother's profession as a teacher of Maltese and my grandfather's career as a professor of Maltese linguistics. On occasion, I observed our headmistress berating some of my classmates for speaking in Maltese while at school. This made me angry as I felt Maltese was being marginalised (Camilleri Grima, Buttigieg, and Xerri, 2013) possibly as a result of the colonial attitude towards Maltese that existed when the school was established and which seemed to be perpetuated by members of staff educated during that time. When I entered the University of Malta for my undergraduate degree in Psychology, I remained distinctly aware that my knowledge of English opened up academic and work opportunities that may not have been available had I not had been fluent in the language. One such opportunity has been training to become a counselling psychologist in the UK.

It was during a three-year period working as an assistant psychologist, as well as a team leader, within a community mental health service in Malta that I began to notice the discursive power of language manifest itself in subtle yet potent ways. The service users I worked with were mostly Maltese-speaking and from working class backgrounds. Support staff tended to share their same linguistic and social backgrounds. As a university trained, bilingual assistant psychologist, I often struggled to express and transmit psychological concepts learned in English to both staff and service users. I was also aware of how at times I felt excluded when service users felt they could trust the support staff more than the professional clinical staff as I was perceived as belonging to the professional and cultural élite. Supervision and training would often be held in English or would make use of



psychological terms in English meaning that individuals not fluent in the language, might not easily access the profession.

Throughout my training both in Malta and the UK I became concerned with the lack of training in considering linguistic difference yet I was aware that as a trainee counselling psychologist I was expected to respect the linguistic diversity of my clients (BPS, 2009) and adapt my own accordingly (Ballinger & Wright, 2007). These experiences have led me to realise that bilingualism within therapy is often complex and rarely straightforward.

A poststructural understanding of reflexivity enables the above-presented influences to be considered as socioculturally and sociohistorically constituted (Parker, 1992). From a poststructuralist perspective, I recognise that I have made several assumptions about my personal and professional experiences of bilingualism in Malta. It may be understood that applying a critical gaze towards myself (Foucault, 1978) in order to highlight how I too may become subject to truth claims made about bilingualism within the Maltese context may enable a poststructural reading of how such truth claims have created limitations and opportunities within my own accounts. I have used reflexivity as a means to inform the reader of my social, cultural, and personal influences while recognising that my own discursive descriptions are themselves power-laden and caught up in varying truth claims. The reading of my personal reflexivity offered here may, therefore, be understood as one reading of many possible readings.

### **3.6 Quality in qualitative research**

Quality in both qualitative and quantitative research is considered important for researchers to consider (Howitt, 2013). As Hammersley (2007) highlights, evaluating the quality of the reading of data generated is considered crucial to ensure that research produces

findings that are able to make significant contributions to the development of counselling psychology. However, Seale (1999) argues that different epistemologies require different criteria. The parameters of reliability, validity and generalizability typically applied to positivist research may not be considered applicable to poststructuralist research, such as FDA, that does not assume a direct relationship between phenomena and our knowledge of them (Parker, 1992; Arribas Allyon & Walkerdine, 2008; Burr, 2013). Utilising specific criteria to evaluate quality in qualitative research may, therefore, offer a more satisfactory criterion.

As Madill et al. (2000) suggest, the criteria for assessing the quality of constructionist research such as FDA must reflect its epistemological assumption that a single, objective truth does not exist. In order to improve the level of quality of studies using FDA, it is recommended that the study is evaluated by appraising the internal coherence of the study, the analysis, and discussion of deviant cases (Chapter Four) as well as researcher openness to the reader's assessment of the analysis. Another proposed measure of quality is ensuring that research engages with socially important areas (Howitt, 2013). This study may be considered of substantial social interest as it aims to unmask the discursive power games at play within therapeutic practitioners' talk concerning working bilingually within the Maltese therapeutic context. Such power games may highlight what opportunities are opened up or shut down for both professionals and clients. Locating this study within the Maltese context also allows for a sociocultural consideration of existing forms of knowledge and their applicability to the local context thus allowing this study to contribute to increasing social justice (Hernandez, 2008) through the reflexivity it offers counselling psychology.

As Willig (2013) argues, it is the reader who has the final say in judging the coherence and rhetorical importance of this study. By outlining the method and methodology

used, as well as understandings of reflexivity and quality, I have enabled the reader to form their own reading of this study so far. In the next chapter (Chapter Four) I present and discuss my reading of the data produced. The findings, together with a critical evaluation of this study, and further considerations of the research method employed will be offered in Chapter Five.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Analysis and Discussion**

#### **4.1 Introduction to Chapter Four**

In this chapter, data from the nine research interviews carried out is used in order to offer one reading of how participants account for bilingualism within the Maltese therapeutic context. The transcripts were transcribed and analysed in accordance with the principals of Foucauldian discourse analysis (FDA) outlined by Willig (2013). The analysis paid particular attention to how Maltese and English were positioned in the talk of the participants; this led to a detailed examination of the discourses that were invoked to privilege one language over the other.

This chapter illustrates how the object of inquiry, bilingualism in Maltese therapeutic practice, is constructed, defended and maintained through the deployment of various discourses (Benford & Gough, 2006). Direct quotations from the interviews are utilised to substantiate and illustrate these discursive constructions and discourses. Although all of the interviews were transcribed and analysed, consistent with other FDA (Willig, 2013), not all participants are represented in the extracts that are presented here. It should be noted however that all of the data have informed the emergent analytic gaze that is outlined and illustrated. The extracts discussed, therefore, make available the evidential basis of claims made by the researcher and give the reader the opportunity to assess these claims in the light of the actual talk of the participants (Morrow, 2005). The extracts also allow for careful illustration of the nuanced detail of how circulating discourses and power relations are reproduced in the talk of the participants. Throughout the analysis, reference to relevant research and knowledge about bilingualism as it relates to therapeutic practice, presented in Chapters One and Two, will be discussed.

Through this analysis, it may be suggested that the category of “bilingualism” within the Maltese therapeutic context is rarely straightforward. The discourses used to discursively construct Maltese-English bilingualism may be seen to be resourced by wider Western ideology where bilingualism is seen as potentially problematic but also by sociohistorical and sociocultural influences particular to the Maltese context as highlighted in Chapter Two. As a result participants grappled with and drew from often conflicting ideologies in their talk (Billig et al., 1988). As Silcock (2013) argues, the dilemmatic nature of social thinking is therefore reproduced in daily speech and hence reflected in the chosen extracts.

As outlined in Chapter Three, a Foucauldian understanding of discourse is concerned with language use and its implications for subjectivity and practice (Willig, 2013). This study focuses on the discursive constructions used by participants to account for their experiences of Maltese-English bilingualism in their professional practice while also locating them within overarching discourses. These discourses illustrate how power circulates through them by enabling or constraining possibilities for what can be said by individuals at specific points in time (Parker, 1992).

In this thesis, three dominant discourses have been identified as outlined in Table 2 (p. 92): “English: a professional discourse”, “Maltese: a cultural discourse” and “Maltese-English bilingualism: a discourse of deviance”. Reference to other ancillary discourses will be made in the data analysis in order to highlight how discourses intersect with each other and to what means this is done (Moore & Seu, 2010). Discursive constructions of Maltese-English bilingualism that are resourced by each identified discourse have also been outlined and discussed in Table 2 (p. 92).

Section	Discourses (in bold) and concomitant discursive constructions (in italics) identified
<b>4.2</b>	<b>English: a professional discourse.</b>
4.2.1	<i>English as the language of professional psychology</i>
4.2.2	<i>English as offering emotional precision</i>
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Maltese: a cultural discourse</b>
4.3.1	<i>Maltese as enabling intimacy</i>
4.3.2	<i>Maltese as a denigrated language</i>
<b>4.4</b>	<b>Maltese-English bilingualism: a discourse of deviance</b>
4.4.1	<i>Translating across Maltese and English as therapeutically disruptive</i>
4.4.2	<i>Code-switching as fostering inequality</i>
4.4.3	<i>Code-switching as a resource</i>

Table 2: A summary of the discourses outlined and the discursive constructions resourced by these discourses.

In the following sections, each discourse is introduced and discussed in terms of how the use of Maltese, English, and Maltese-English bilingualism in therapeutic practice is varyingly constructed. As is inkeeping with FDA (Willig, 2013), the subject positions these discourses allow and what implications for subjectivity these may have will also be discussed as relevant to the data presented.

#### **4.2 English: a professional discourse**

In this discourse, English is constructed as irrevocably linked to the practice of therapy through two discursive constructions. The first discursive construction of English as the natural language in which to express psychological terms is explored further in “English as the language of professional psychology”. English was also discursively constructed as the language best suited to describe, represent, and communicate emotions; a practice considered important within therapy as illustrated in the second discursive construction identified “English as offering emotional precision”. Participants, therefore, resourced their understandings of their use of English in therapeutic practice through a professional discourse whereby English is implicated as the better language with which to communicate

psychological knowledge; specifically through technical and emotional vocabulary. Bonnici (2007) argues that the use of English to express professional jargon occurs in Malta in many fields requiring technical language. This practice may hence reflect a professional discourse that is not limited in its application to psychological professions but extends beyond therapy and forms part of a wider cultural understanding of English in Malta as the language that aids and denotes professionalism.

#### **4.2.1 English as the language of professional psychology.**

Within this discursive construction, English is constructed as the only possible language with which to communicate psychological terms. The majority of participants glossed English as central and crucial to their therapeutic practice and associated activities.

**Extract 1:** “When I use like, really, like psychology concepts, you know, object-relations concepts I use English. I have no other words you know? /I: Yeah, yeah, yeah/ Even ‘empathy’ you know? *Empatija*, you know, like /I: Yeah/ it sounds **so** weird /I: yeah, yeah/ that I can’t do it...” (**Carla**)

**Extract 2:** “Even if I write my process notes I would never think of writing process notes in Maltese or even when I’m jotting down things the only thing I would write down in Maltese is a direct quote from a client you know...My familiar psychological language is in English.” (**Caroline**)

In these extracts, both Carla and Caroline discursively describe English as the professional language that best communicates psychological terms. They foreclose the possibility of using Maltese technical terms by constructing them as “weird” (Carla) or unthinkable (Caroline) thereby rendering them impossible to use. By describing the word “*empatija*” (empathy) as strange, Carla, however, ignores what peculiarities there might be within English, psychological terms. Both Carla and Caroline thereby offer a realist understanding of English as naturally resourced thus reinforcing its essentialization as the only language in which to carry out professional psychological activities. Maltese as a possible language for psychological communication is subjugated to the dominant professional discourse of English as technical language and thereby silenced (Foucault, 2003).

As Tsitsipis (2007) argues, such a discursive construction of English as normalized may occur in various contexts and may hence be further resourced by a wider understanding of English as a professional language within the world of international academia. As Hobsbawm (1996) argues, English is often the language used to communicate technical terms to specialist audiences rendering the use and development of such terms in other languages, such as Maltese, possible yet unnecessary. The dominance in the communication and use of psychological terms in English may hence be thought of as part of a globalising process. For Prilleltensky (2012), psychology is one form of knowledge that has been formed and generated in specific parts of the world and consequently applied to various geographical areas. The potential to silence forms of knowledge created in local languages also contributes to the maintenance of the discursive construction of English as a technical and psychological language.



**Extract 3:** “I think processing is actually done as you said because the training was done in English so for example if I say ‘*Mela l-istance tiegħi ma’ dal-klijent tkun*’ (So my stance with this client is), ‘Stance’ I don’t know, we don’t have a word, ehm, *jew inkella ngħid* ‘*Dill-client veruhekk, inhossha* engulfing’ (or I’ll say, ‘I find this client engulfing’) how would you say that in Maltese? So there are words which I can’t find in Maltese you know? Ego: ‘*inhoss li l-ego vera* inflated’ *per eżempju*’” ‘inflated’ *ngħid*. (For example ‘I find their ego is very inflated’, I’ll say ‘inflated’).” (**Sandra**)

In this extract, Sandra offers a reading of English as resourcing her professional psychological talk. She offers examples of psychological terms: “engulfing”, “ego” and “inflated” to illustrate the dominance of English psychological terms and the inadequacy of Maltese in enabling specific professional communication. Parker (1998) argues that therapeutic practices create specific discourses on self-reflection based in Western philosophy that influence how the self is thought to emerge in therapy. Prilleltensky (2012) links this argument to the power of psychology as a globalised practice that uses language to create narratives that are then internalised by clients across cultures. The unquestioned spread of therapeutic knowledge may have therefore enabled psychology to become a colonising practice when dealing with cultural and linguistic difference (Parker, 1997).

The above extract, therefore, highlights the power dynamics within technical psychological terms that are communicated solely in English. Following Foucault’s (1982) understanding of discourse as impacting subjectivity by allowing or prohibiting possibilities for action, the subjectivity of clients and therapeutic practitioners in Malta may be impacted

by the linguistic domination of psychological terms in English by offering therapeutic understandings that may not resonate with Maltese cultural ones.

Being trained in English, whether on an undergraduate or postgraduate course, abroad or in Malta, was often presented by participants as an explanation for the difficulties experienced when using psychological terms in Maltese. This discursive construction thereby framed English as forming part of institutional practices implicated in the propagation and preservation of the professional discourse that maintains these understandings.

**Extract 4:** “So yes having, I mean, coming to think about it now yes I did used to find it difficult so certain things [technical terms] I used to feel more comfortable to explain to them in English because I was taught to think in English.” (**Louis**)

**Extract 5:** “Definitely like I don’t even know what the word for formulation would be in Maltese...formulation, all the psychodynamic concepts, obviously all the CBT and humanistic concepts, but it’s just the way you’re trained to think, is in English.” (**Vanessa**)

As Foucault (2003) argues, educational institutions may act as sites that maintain or resist discourse through the practices they engage in. In the above extracts, training courses reproduce the professional discourse of English as the language of psychological knowledge on a local level by carrying out therapeutic training in English. Psychological knowledge in Maltese may be seen as a marginalised form of knowledge when compared to English. The

professional discourse resourcing these accounts of English thereby allows participants to position themselves as deskilled practitioners when faced with using psychological terms in Maltese. In these extracts, participants justify this subject position by making reference to their training being done in English. This lack of confidence has also been found in research conducted by Costa and Dewaele (2014) where multilingual therapists trained in English struggled to adapt interventions and psychological knowledge to other languages.

In the extract below Sandra discursively illustrates how the interaction between institutional practice and the professional discourse resourcing constructions of English as the language of professional psychology, enables power relations between English and Maltese to be subtly enacted through language use in course work.

**Extract 6:** “Actually, to be honest, I never asked [to write in Maltese] but I never asked because I used to think that if I asked that they would perceive me as something less, that I’m asking as I don’t really have a good mastery of English. So I never asked because everybody was handing in everything in English so I said ‘I just have to comply.’” (**Sandra**)

In this extract, the dominant use of English in training may subtly demonstrate the constraining power of this discourse for Sandra through her tacit acceptance of English as the symbol of academic knowledge. As Camilleri Grima, Buttigieg, and Xerri (2013) argue, the privileging of English or Maltese in schools may lead to barriers for linguistically diverse students. Sandra positions herself as constrained and subjugated to the discourse of English as a professional language. She implicitly adheres to this discourse by unquestioningly using

English in her assignments thereby illustrating the subtle workings of power that shut down the use of Maltese at an individual level. By acting on Sandra's actions, this discourse may contain a disciplinary effect as demonstrated in Sandra's unquestioned use of English (Foucault, 1982).

The importance given to English in Sandra's training course potentially divorces the use of Maltese from psychological training. As demonstrated in this extract, the discursive construction of English as the language of professional psychology may constrain the development of professional practice in Maltese. By emphasising her need to exhibit a good command of English, Sandra attempts to prove her ability to engage with the professional vocabulary required of her chosen profession. This tension is also shown in research carried out by Georgiou (2014) who found that international counselling trainees working in English experienced a sense of anxiety at needing to demonstrate a good grasp of the English language.

These scenarios may offer an understanding of Foucault's (2006) work on power, specifically how it moves dynamically through the state to micro-practices that occur in everyday life (Hook, 2008). A top-down analysis shows how this particular discursive construction of English as the language of professional psychology shuts down the possible use of Maltese in the development of professional identity. This analysis further highlights how this professional discourse resourcing understandings of English, moves from a global discourse that intersects with historically-informed constructions of English as a prestigious language within the Maltese context (Frendo, 1991), to institutional practice through the favouring of English on training courses and on to localised practice acting on the psychologist-in-training who uses English to demonstrate professional and academic adequacy.

In the following extract, Lisa comments on how she was able to overcome the pressure to speak good English during therapeutic sessions by focussing on extra-lingual factors.

**Extract 7:** “And I think what helped me was not to focus on whether I speak perfect English, or I don’t know, the perfect manner. It’s like, to just be, that is what helps me /I:Hmm/ I just, I just sit there and just be and I trust that whatever I need to communicate, I will find a way to communicate /I:mhm/ If I do not manage to communicate in language, I use a lot of drawings with my clients... I don’t see therapy as just talking /I: mhm/ I think it’s more than that. I think it’s the emotional connection and I think that the emotional sometimes it needs to go beyond words.” (Carla)

Carla is able to position herself outside of the constraining effects of this professional discourse as discussed above. Carla resists this discourse thereby allowing her to be empowered and reskilled by considering non-linguistic aspects of therapy as most important for therapeutic practice. When stuck she uses visual communication as a means to overcome linguistic barriers. Carla also places a deeper form of emotional communication as central to therapy, framed as eluding language, to overcome the power relations associated with the use of Maltese and English in therapy.

By framing non-linguistic aspects of therapy as important, Carla is drawing from a psychotherapeutic discourse (Parker, 1998) that differs to the “talking cure” discourse prevalent in counselling psychology. Carla resists this discourse that puts language at the

heart of therapy as utilised by various authors (Seay Clauss, 1998; Ramos Sanchez, 2007; Kokoliari & Catanzarite, 2011) by refusing its dominance as the most important therapeutic activity. This counter-discourse enables Carla to resource her confidence as a practitioner by not allowing language to overshadow other possibilities offered by alternative therapeutic activities, such as drawing. This discursive construction, therefore, allows for a problematization of the essentialization of English as the language of professional psychology. Through this problematization alternative discourses and courses of action are opened up for therapeutic practitioners to consider (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008).

#### **4.2.2 English as offering emotional precision.**

The discursive construction of “English as offering emotional precision” may also be located within a professional discourse. This construction shifts focus from participant accounts of Maltese and English as they relate to the communication of psychological terms to an understanding of Maltese and English as they relate to another activity central to therapy: emotional expression. As Lupton (1998) argues counselling psychology is a profession created to enable clients to safely discuss their emotions. Emotional talk may hence be considered a crucial component of therapy for both clients as well as therapists whose role within therapeutic discourse is seen as aiding self-knowledge in clients (Parker, 1998) on an emotional level.

**Extract 8:** “Aha when I think it comes to emotions people are more articulate when they speak in English you know? They get into more detail, you know? It’s like describing in great detail a specific emotion or describing in great detail how they processed that emotion, you know, the experience.” (**Vanessa**)

**Extract 9:** “I think Maltese is very limited when it comes to emotional words.

In fact, what I notice is that we either over-generalise the use of a particular word, like for example, everyone is depressed or everyone is angry but mostly depressed or getting mad or getting crazy. In English, we have more variety and even to express ourselves for example if we have to make the distinction between anger and rage, in Maltese, I think we do lack a word for rage.”

(Lisa)

**Extract 10:** “If a person is extremely depressed I say obviously, ehm, you’re feeling depressed. *Però* (however) I think the range of feeling words is bigger in English than it is in Maltese. Ehm, in Maltese it’s *imdejjaq*, *imdejjaq ħafna*, *imdejjaqftit* (sad, very sad, not so sad) in getting the intensity of the word of the feeling, there aren’t enough words that are expressive of the intensity. In English you have down, sad, depressed, *manafx* (I don’t know), devastated or desolate or= but in Maltese you have the core feeling word and then you have you know? A little down or a lot down or depressed or not depressed.”(Dominic)

These extracts illustrate a conceptualization of vocabulary related to emotions as dependant on the language being spoken. English is constructed as offering wider vocabulary and in contrast, Maltese is framed as inherently inhibitive. As Lupton (2008) argues, such a construction may draw from a realist discourse of emotions thereby showing an intersection between this discourse and the professional discourse resourcing participant constructions of

English. These accounts may thereby be located within a realist epistemological view of emotions as fixed biological entities found across cultures and sociohistorical contexts. English is considered by participants as better resourced to reflect emotions due its wide lexical possibilities; the English language and English-speaking clients are inherently better suited to this therapeutic activity.

Each participant in this extract speaks about the benefit of describing emotions in English from a different perspective: Vanessa (extract 8) speaks about “people” being able to elaborate their emotional subjectivity more profoundly thus referring to a sense of universality in the perceived benefits of this construction of English. Lisa (extract 9) speaks from a “we” perspective thereby making reference to societal practices within her account while Dominic (extract 10) speaks from an “I” position thereby referring to his professional experience. Speaking from these varying understandings allows participants’ accounts of their use of English to resonate across differing contexts and situations thereby reflecting the commonality of the professional discourse resourcing these understandings (Moore & Seu, 2010).

Lisa and Dominic both exalt the benefits of using English adjectives in their therapeutic work to describe emotions by comparing them to the limitations of Maltese vocabulary. This binary construction of English as containing rich emotional vocabulary and Maltese as poor may be considered a dividing practice (Foucault, 1982) that creates a process of differentiation: the subject who chooses English to discuss their emotions is better positioned to gain therapeutic benefits than the subject who chooses Maltese. As Lutz (2007) suggests, different cultures may speak about emotions in different ways. This discursive construction of “English as offering emotional precision” therefore does not allow participants to consider the social and cultural formation of emotions and the potentially



varying emotional vocabulary offered by Maltese and English. What is instead proposed is a fixed and hierarchical view of each language's suitability for the task at hand that is influenced by political and social processes that remain unquestioned.

### **4.3 Maltese: a cultural discourse**

This discourse illustrates the hegemonic dominance of sociohistorical and sociocultural configurations of Maltese as the natural language of Malta yet also as a less prestigious language. "Maltese: a cultural discourse" was variously reproduced through two discursive constructions as resourced by an understanding of Maltese as a language rooted in cultural understandings specific to the Maltese context. In the first discursive construction outlined, "Maltese as enabling intimacy", participants produced constructions of Maltese as the natural language for deeper self-expression and communication. In the second "Maltese as a denigrated language", Maltese was constructed as a coarse language when compared to English thereby reflecting historical attempts to delegitimize attempts to recognise Maltese as Malta's national language.

#### **4.3.1 Maltese as enabling intimacy.**

In this discursive construction, Maltese is framed as a sentimental language that is representative of a common Maltese experience thus allowing it to be glossed as a language that promotes deeper intersubjective understanding.

**Extract 11:** "I took it [the option to write in Maltese] and it= because I believe that if I want to express myself I want to express myself in the way I deem most appropriate... It's not like I'm choosing to write something in Maltese because I don't

know how to write it in English, but I would feel that it would be more poignant to use that word.” (**Lisa**)

**Extract 12:** “Because there was a strong emotional component, especially because the course [clinical psychology] was about self-reflexive practice so you have to speak a lot about yourself and when referring to the, like, to the momentum of therapy and like when describing a case study or add a history of the patient, I often used to feel compelled to like, go to my mother language.” (**Sandra**)

In these extracts, both Lisa and Sandra discuss their use of Maltese in assignments. They construct Maltese as a language that enables them to successfully describe highly personal and moving moments. This helps create a view of Maltese as enabling a different kind of communication to that offered by English (Section 4.2). Maltese is framed as offering opportunities for deeper reflexivity; an activity that is considered crucial to counselling psychology (Woolfe & Strawbridge; 2010). As a result, participants are able to position themselves within this cultural discourse as self-reflexive practitioners and Maltese becomes implicated in the creation of intimacy. Lisa emphasises her switch to Maltese as a choice that allows her to offer a more personal and “poignant” piece of work. Maltese is therefore consciously used to enable Lisa to reveal her emotive self and allow it to be known by others through her course work.

Sandra uses the term “mother language” to describe Maltese thereby glossing it as her natural language through the deployment of a sentimental and cultural discourse. As Jaffe (2007) argues, the term “mother tongue” is connected to the feminine hence bearing a

gendered understanding of Maltese as an intimate language. The concept of the “mother tongue” may also be considered an essentialist concept through which Maltese identity is allowed to be irrevocably linked to the Maltese language. Frendo (2008) argues that national understandings of language that promote nationhood have historically been used to promote Maltese as a national language. Maltese thereby is also embedded within a socio-political and national discourse of who may be considered Maltese and who may not, with language used as a criterion thus reflecting the multiple discourses that resource current understandings of Maltese as a language that denotes cultural similarity.

In the extract below Anna constructs Maltese as the language needed to communicate with a Maltese audience. This construction may be located within a cultural discourse that views language as a means to express the Maltese experience. In this extract, this discourse also intersects with a national discourse that enables understandings of language as denoting Maltese national identity.

**Extract 13:** “I, I personally believe that as a professional I should /I: mhm/ stick to one language and in this case it should be Maltese because we’re in Malta, the general public is Maltese and if you want to put a message across /I: hm/ to the general public I think Maltese should be the option /I: yeah/ and it should be done very accurately...”  
(Anna)

In this extract, Anna glosses Maltese as the language with which to transmit psychological knowledge to the wider public. This account highlights a tension between the need to communicate psychological knowledge in Maltese, a language previously constructed

as unsuitable to the task (Section 4.2) and ensuring that understanding occurs on a wide level. Anna's description of Maltese as the language of the "general public" enables her to justify her use of Maltese to bridge the gap between psychological knowledge, usually communicated in English, and Maltese as a more personal mode of communication. It could be argued, that just as the use of English as the preferred language of professional psychology could be excluding, the use of Maltese as the language that enables intimacy could be equally excluding for individuals who do not understand Maltese. This extract thereby highlights how understandings of Maltese as the language representative of a culturally and linguistically homogeneous unit, create views of Maltese-English societal bilingualism as a problematic practice (Heller, 2007). Maltese and English are hence kept as separate as possible and are fixed in the roles they have been assigned.

In the following extract, Vanessa discusses the political implications of working with clients with different linguistic identities within grouptherapeutic settings and how the discourse of Maltese as cultural language of the majority may be problematic.

**Extract 14:** "Ehm, like, so when working in an NGO I worked at X with addiction, there was a large group of people who were most comfortable in Maltese and, ehm, there would be issues when an English-speaking person would come and since it's a rehab, it's a residential place...so we used to have this dilemma, like, if we had to admit a person who was English-speaking and in a group setting, would they understand?" (**Vanessa**)

Vanessa utilises an example that highlights the perceived practical difficulties faced when working as a clinical psychologist within a bilingual community. She particularly focuses on the dilemmas presented by English-speaking clients entering group therapy composed of majority Maltese-speaking clients. Although English occupies a dominant position in professional practice (Section 4.2), when faced with the needs of clients the dominance of English is weakened.

Whereas postmodern understandings of bilingualism have moved away from viewing it as a problematic practice to viewing it as a resource and communicative system in its own right (Tsitsipis, 2007), this extract demonstrates how bilingualism on a community level may be problematic by raising questions of inclusion and exclusion based on linguistic understanding. Several authors (Ivers, Ivers, & Duffey, 2013; Netto, 2006; Pattison, Rowland, Richards et al., 2009) propose the creation of multilingual services as a means to meet the needs of bilingual clients, Vanessa's example illustrates how this solution may not always be suitable to bilingual communities, such as Malta, composed of individuals who are bilingual to varying degrees.

These extracts (13 and 14) further highlight how bilingualism in Malta may result in a dividing practice (Foucault, 1982). The cultural discourse of Maltese as a national language is used to create categories that aid in the identification of the Maltese subject and the non-Maltese subject. Individuals who do not fit within the category of Maltese subject may not be considered as legitimised in their need to understand due to Maltese as the language of the majority as described in extract 13. In extract 14, Maltese and English are constructed as competing resources that therapists must consider when treating clients in a group (Stroud, 2007) with the majority possibly acting as a deciding factor. Language, therefore, becomes a means to judge who is allowed to participate in group therapy and who is not- both linguistic

needs cannot be simultaneously met within the same cohort. The power relations between Maltese and English may consequently operate differently in varying situations and contexts. The cultural discourse as applied to actual therapeutic practice can thus be seen as standing in contrast to the earlier professional discourse resourcing constructions of “English as the language of professional psychology” understanding (Section 4.2).

In contrast to the marginalisation of Maltese presented in “English: a professional discourse”, in “Maltese: a cultural discourse” Maltese appears to have been given prominence over English. However, Maltese has been privileged in a rather limited sense, primarily being positioned as a cultural resource and as enabling intimacy. This has some resonance with Wetherell and Potter’s (1993) analysis of Pakeha’s talk which acknowledged the importance of Maori cultural heritage while simultaneously undermining any claims to genuine political and economic reform that they might have. In this way, the very designation of Maltese as a ‘cultural resource’ may actually serve to delimit its power and support discourses that privilege English in terms of broader claims to power within the sphere of professional practice.

#### **4.3.2 Maltese as a denigrated language.**

While Maltese has been positioned as a cultural resource that expresses identity and enables intimacy it is also glossed as a coarse language when compared to English. It’s very capacity to reflect culture and intimate experience is constructed as intertwined with a lack of refinement, precision, and professional kudos. Maltese thereby comes to reflect social, cultural and historical disadvantage as exemplified in the following extract.

**Extract 15:** “I find Maltese a bit rougher, I don’t know, like, it’s my impression, whereas, ehm, English it’s kind of more ethical, it’s more polite somehow.” (**Carla**)

Thomas (2013) argues that one of the impacts of colonisation is the creation of an inferior view of the colonised subject. This may lead to the coloniser becoming an aspirational model as demonstrated through Carla’s description of Maltese and English. The construction of Maltese as “rougher” (extract 15) echoes discourses perpetuated within postcolonial contexts regarding the native language as less valued (Crystal, 2000). This construction may also be located within a cultural discourse resourced by historical understandings that undermine Maltese as a legitimate language due to its historical links to the Muslim world and subsequent working class status (Frendo, 1991). In these extracts, English is presented as a language that is inherently more pleasant thus maintaining a discourse of English as prestigious which as Burck (2011) argues may be considered a stereotyped view of the language.

These oppositional categorisations of Maltese as coarse and English as polite may mirror the political and power relations between Maltese and English, thus mirroring Tsitsipis’ (2007) claim that bilingualism is a category that is politically charged. This polarisation of Maltese as vulgar and English as polite may further reflect Malta’s history of subjugation to the foreign other which as Frendo (2014) argues is often enacted in a perceived admiration for foreign culture and goods. In this case, English is exalted to the language that represents a more socially acceptable mode of expression.

Dominic and Vanessa further illustrate this binary and oppositional discursive construction of Maltese when offering their understandings of particular Maltese vocabulary, described as “foul” (Dominic) and “crude” (Vanessa), when compared to English.

**Extract16:** “Because then the foul language in English, the foul language in Maltese is more aggressive than it is in English... Ehm you’d say “fuck off” you know, like in Maltese it’s**very** depicted, it’s like saying which part of your sexual organ you’re putting into= it’s more sort of aggressive in that way... Some words in Maltese are a bit more, the connotation is a bit more, ehm, foul you know.” (**Dominic**)

**Extract 17:** “Well, when speaking about sexuality for example that was= yes aha, sexuality is something that I find difficult, ehm, even for them because in Maltese there are terms that are more, you know, formal but we don’t use them that much and the common language sometimes isn’t that= it’s kind of raw, crude.” (**Vanessa**)

In Dominic’s account, he focuses on informal words used during moments of anger, particularly ones considered sexually aggressive. Vanessa uses informal sexual terms as an example to illustrate the non-suitability of such terms in Maltese during therapy for both clients and for herself as a therapist. Milner and O’Byrne (2004) argue that therapists are often in a position to influence how clients build their narrative during therapy by subtly controlling the type of language used. The glossing of these words as offensive and rough may thereby have potentially limiting effects on what Maltese words clients feel they can or cannot use. In a Foucauldian (1975) sense such linguistic control may be considered a form



of discipline, subtly or explicitly banning such words from therapy and thereby limiting the practices counselling psychologists may engage in. By rendering these words inferior and unpleasant power relations between Maltese and English are made visible through the potentially constraining effect this particular understanding has on therapeutic practice.

#### **4.4 Maltese-English bilingualism: a discourse of deviance**

As shown, previous discourses (Sections 4.2 and 4.3) have highlighted how Maltese and English were discursively constructed in meaningful and opposing ways. In this final discourse “Maltese-English bilingualism: a discourse of deviance”, the interaction between Maltese and English through both translation and code-mixing as these relate to therapeutic practices, is problematized in the discursive constructions of “Translation across Maltese and English as therapeutically disruptive” and “Code-switching as fostering inequality”. This discourse led participants to position themselves as perturbed by their efforts to reconcile the various meanings previously created around each language. A third discursive construction of “Code-switching as a resource” offers an understanding of bilingualism that resists the dominant constricting discourse of bilingualism as deviant thus opening up an alternative opportunity for action.

##### **4.4.1 Translation across Maltese and English as therapeutically disruptive.**

In this discursive construction, participants described the difficulties faced when translating across English and Maltese. As shown in the following extract, translation is constructed as representing a discontinuity across the use of both languages (Burck, 2011) particularly in the uses each is constructed as enabling in therapeutic practice.

**Extract 18:** “Ehm, it [translating] affects it; it does affect it [therapy], ehm, when it comes to communication, choosing the right word. Ehm, explaining things, ehm, because language is not just a language, language is also a mirror of the culture as well...” (**Carla**)

**Extract 19:** “So yes it [translating] was sometimes a problem because every language has its particular expressions and sayings and phrases and other languages might not equivalently reflect, and very accurately, the same meaning ...” (**Anna**)

Carla (extract 18) and Anna (extract 19) position themselves as professionally constrained by the constant interplay of translating concepts across languages. In these accounts, participants offer an understanding of language as a sociocultural product that contains different concepts that may be constructed and maintained within particular cultures but not within others. In these extracts, therapy within the Maltese bilingual context provides a view of Maltese and English as not being easily transposed due to their differing cultural connotations. The contextual specificity of these languages, therefore, makes it difficult to translate precise concepts to a language that may not allow for the same modes of thought and expression. Verdinelli and Biever (1990) describe the inner translation process that bilingual therapists trained in English engage in, as slowing down the pace of therapy. Both Carla and Anna discursively describe the difficulties in translation as hindering the therapeutic process; as a result, the interaction between Maltese and English through translation is glossed as limiting their ability to deliver therapy smoothly and efficiently.

These extracts have specifically focussed on participants' understandings of how translation hinders their ability to fully exercise their professionalism thereby offering accounts of the internal processes the therapeutic practitioner must engage in. In the following discursive construction, participants turn their attention to the impact of bilingualism on the therapeutic relationship with focus placed on the spoken interaction of Maltese and English through code-switching.

#### **4.4.2 Code-switching as fostering inequality.**

In this discourse, participants further problematized bilingualism in therapy by constructing the use of both Maltese and English during therapy as containing the potential to negatively impact the therapeutic relationship. In these extracts, participants discursively describe code-switching specifically with Maltese-speaking clients as a troubled practice with no reference to English-speaking clients made.

**Extract 20:** "I would like to do all my sessions with people who are mainly Maltese-speaking. I would like to do them all in Maltese: I start in Maltese and end in Maltese but somehow I still find myself using the English language and I don't really like it because I don't know, maybe my client= Sometimes I am scared, sort of, especially if the clients are from a particular= from a low educational background, I am afraid I would create a distance between myself and the client or make the client feel or think less of himself. Somehow I find myself using both unfortunately and then I switch immediately but still it escapes sometimes." **(Lisa)**

In the extract above, Lisa presents a therapeutic dilemma when talking about the use of English when working in Maltese with clients who mainly speak Maltese. Code-switching is framed as an interferential practice that alienates clients through the creation of a power differential within the therapeutic relationship. As Auer (2007) argues, such a local understanding of code-switching highlights the meanings designated to Maltese and English as resourced by socio-political understandings. In this instance, this discursive construction reproduces understandings of Maltese and English as representative of social class (Cassar, 2014) which Lisa positions herself as aware of and constrained by. English here acts as a symbol of prestige and privilege with the Maltese-speaking client positioned as potentially feeling insecure if English is introduced. The intimacy offered by Maltese is disrupted. Lisa's subjectivity as an ethical practitioner who values equality is undermined by code-switching to English.

Consequently, switching to English is seen as an error that creates instability within the therapeutic relationship. This reading of code-switching may be resourced by traditionally monolingual understandings of code-switching as an irregular practice (Heller, 2007). From a Foucauldian (1975) perspective, Lisa's choice to switch back to Maltese immediately may be understood as a form of self-discipline and regulation; reverting to speaking in Maltese enables Lisa to reposition herself as an ethical practitioner who values equality once more.

In the following extract Dominic also specifically problematizes the introduction of English jargon when working with Maltese-speaking clients. Here Dominic discursively illustrates the difficulties in reconciling the meanings created around English as a professional language for psychological practice (Section 4.2.1) and his position as an ethical practitioner who exercises his professionalism by valuing equality within the therapeutic relationship.

**Extract 21:** “So sometimes I need to be cautious that someone who is not English-speaking and very Maltese-speaking that I might= I need to be cautious not to use, then the caution of using jargon which is more English than Maltese. I think what I would want= I think I value equality, I value our sharing so I would not want to come across as someone who is you know, the expert, ‘I know it all they don’t’ especially someone with low self-worth, I really want to treat them as a human being you know rather than they don’t know anything, I know it all.” (**Dominic**)

In this extract, Dominic constructs switching to technical language in English with clients from Maltese-speaking backgrounds as containing the potential to create inequality within the therapeutic relationship. Dominic positions himself as aware of the power dynamics both in using English but also in using “jargon”. As Ballinger and Wright (2007) have highlighted, access to therapy as well as language may be highly linked to social class. This extract further highlights issues of access to specialist vocabulary in English are constructed as problematic for Maltese-speaking clients. The implication of clients not being able to understand is framed as inculcating a sense of inferiority within them.

Technical jargon in itself may be considered a specific form of psychological knowledge created within a therapeutic discourse that is typically utilised by professionals (Parker, 1998). The use of English jargon within the Maltese context, therefore, may be imbued with several layers of power (Foucault, 2006) through social class associations but

also through the “professional speak” that jargon represents and that is generally understood by members of the psychological profession. Dominic positions himself as aware of the tension between utilising psychological terms in English with Maltese-speaking clients and maintaining a therapeutic relationship based on equality. He is keen to avoid positioning himself as “expert” in order to avoid creating distance and being positioned as superior by clients; a stance that is coherent with counselling psychology’s humanistic epistemology that emphasises therapist-client collaboration and equality (Strawbridge & Woolfe, 2010).

#### **4.4.3 Code-switching as a resource.**

Whereas the previous discursive constructions highlighted the difficulties of working bilingually which enabled them to be located within a discourse of deviance, in this discourse code-switching is framed as a resource that enhances therapy. This discursive construction may be seen as marking a departure from a discourse of bilingualism as deviant towards a discourse of bilingualism as a tool and legitimate form of communication to come to the fore.

This understanding enables a view of bilingualism which as outlined by Heller (2007), is concerned with the way different languages in bilingual contexts enable different resources to be drawn upon under particular conditions. This discursive construction may be resourced by a counter discourse (Willig, 2013) that resists previous constructions of bilingual forms of communication as a nonstandard practice that negatively impacts therapy (Sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.2). The construction of code-switching as a resource in therapy liberates therapeutic practitioners to utilise forms of bilingual communication as tools to enhance their practice but also to understand clients’ own code-switching practices. This alternative discourse of bilingualism legitimises it as a valid form of linguistic communication that enables various understandings and nuances to develop in participants’ therapeutic understandings.

**Extract 23:** “I cannot see how I can go back to using one language; I really cannot see that at this stage. I think I would, as you’re implying, miss on a pool of possibilities which I might not be able to learn, keeping, you know, a language.” (**Anna**)

Anna presents the bilingual use of Maltese and English as the way forward, sticking to one language is considered highly limiting. Mixing the two languages allows for Maltese-English bilingualism to emerge as a language in its own right (Bailey, 2007) as opposed to separate linguistic categories thus avoiding the dilemmas associated with Maltese and English as distinct linguistic codes as previously outlined by participants. This allows for a view of code-switching as a productive and liberating therapeutic practice as opposed to the deviant practice previously described.

Furthermore, the use of both Maltese and English is framed as allowing for “a pool of possibilities”. Bilingualism is therefore no longer constraining to therapeutic practice as constructed in sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.2. The account presented here may be located within a discourse of bilingualism as a communicative resource. Ideologically, this discourse may be informed by post-national ideology that views bilingualism as a useful form of capital in the neoliberal labour market (Pujolar, 2007). This ideology moves away from maintaining the association between language and the nation state thereby dismantling any previous constructions of Maltese as the language of the Maltese. This shift in understanding bilingualism does not automatically mean that the inequalities between languages have been eliminated, but rather that it is no longer the state but market demands that dictate the values

given. As Foucault (2008) argues, under these conditions the subject becomes governed by the economic liberal market that allows for minority practices such as code-switching, to occur according to its demands.

This discursive construction thereby allows for a consideration of therapeutic possibilities enabled by the discourse of bilingualism as a communicative tool (Garrett, 2007). Anna positions herself within this discourse as a flexible and enabled practitioner by not problematizing the co-existence of Maltese and English in her account.

In the extract below Caroline illustrates the therapeutic possibilities of code-switching. She describes a therapeutic scenario where clients switch from English to Maltese and from Maltese to English to position themselves differently during therapy.

**Extract 24:** “Funnily enough I had a client and I told him ‘Are you aware that when you get really angry, you switch to Maltese?’ and he usually always switches to English; he might switch a word here and there but when he gets angry, he’ll explain stuff in Maltese. So I made him aware, it wasn’t anything to analyse I just said ‘do you notice?’ because maybe Maltese is more of a passionate, angry kind of language mostly and I think sometimes people when they want to appear- I’m trying to think of the client I saw before you because now it’s coming to mind- either when they want to seem superior or when they want to talk about something, *mhux* [not] important to them but like it’s more about work they might switch /I:hmm/ to English...”

**(Caroline)**



In this example, Maltese and English are constructed as offering clients the possibility to use languages as a resource to change subject position while in therapy. This particular example offers a discursive understanding of Maltese as enabling clients to express anger and use English to communicate prestige or discuss work. These different uses are therefore linked to each language with Caroline also offering an essentialization of Maltese to “a passionate, angry kind of language”. Maltese hence becomes bound to this form of emotional expression and adds a different dimension to the previous understanding of English as the best vehicle to discuss emotions as shown in Extract 25 (first presented as extract 9 above).

**Extract 25:** “I think Maltese is very limited when it comes to emotional words. In fact, what I notice is that we either over-generalise the use of a particular word, like for example, everyone is depressed or everyone is angry but mostly depressed or getting mad or getting crazy. In English, we have more variety and even to express ourselves for example if we have to make the distinction between anger and rage, in Maltese, I think we do lack a word for rage.” **(Lisa)**

In Lisa’s extract, English is presented as providing what may be considered a more intellectual understanding of anger through its vast vocabulary that aids in the descriptions of the various nuances of this particular emotional category. Caroline’s extract (24) provides an understanding of anger as **experientially** linked to Maltese; Maltese is thus constructed as providing an authentic, expression of anger as lived by clients. This understanding reflects psychodynamic literature on bilingualism that offers a reading of different languages used by bilingual clients as distancing or enabling varying emotional or intellectual functions as

demanding by the situation being discussed (Rozensky & Gomez, 1983; Santiago-Rivera, et al., 2009; Kokoliari & Catanzarite, 2011). Maltese and English thereby enable different facets of anger to emerge in therapeutic practice.

Caroline interprets her clients' use of English as attempts to position themselves as "superior" thus drawing on cultural associations of English as an upper-class practice (Baldacchino, 2014); this also resonates with extracts 20 and 21 where participants expressed concern at creating a sense of inferiority in clients with the introduction of English. Caroline describes how clients may switch to English when speaking about work thereby strategically utilising English to denote professionalism; a similar position taken by participants while constructing their own use of English as a vehicle to communicate competence (Section 4.2.1). This may reflect a wider practice occurring in Malta whereby English is the language used for technical terms across various fields (Bonnici, 2007; Calleja, 2014) thus reflecting how wider sociocultural practices are replayed during therapy through discourse.

Caroline's interpretation of her client's choice to switch may, therefore, be resourced by understandings of Maltese and English that reflect the power differentials between them. This differs from classic psychodynamic perspectives whereby switching language is framed as an unconscious client choice used to distance the self from troubling emotions (Marcos & Urcuyo, 1979). The understanding presented in this extract may instead be resourced by a postmodern bilingual discourse that provides a reading of code-switching as strategic (Bailey, 2007).

Caroline also uses this client example to discursively describe how she as a counselling psychologist responds to client's code-switching practices during therapy. In this extract, she draws her client's attention to his code-switching activities thereby making it worthy of therapeutic discussion. However, she states that "it isn't anything to analyse"

thereby not framing it as being of central therapeutic concern. As a result, Caroline positions herself as aware of how clients utilise language to tap into different subjectivities during therapy and regards this process as normal. In contrast, Costa and Dewaele (2014) found that multilingual and monolingual therapists often struggled to allow other languages, especially ones they did not understand into the therapy room. The openness to discussing code-switching presented in this account may be due to the bilingual practices historically and currently present within Maltese society (Vella, 2003). This difference may reflect how as Garrett (2007) points out, understandings of bilingualism are often localised i.e. meanings are given within particular cultures according to political, sociohistorical and sociocultural movements.

In the following extract, Sandra speaks about a different form of code-switching when working with clients: from Maltese to her Gozitan dialect. She is the only participant to make reference to the use of dialect, perhaps reflecting its minority language status (Pujolar, 2007). Although Sandra offers considerations of different linguistic codes to the ones presented above, her understandings of the use of Maltese and English further illustrate the discursive construction of code-switching as a resource as facilitated by the discourse of bilingualism as a communicative tool.

**Extract 26:** “When working with Gozitan [from the island of Gozo] clients, I use the Gozitan dialect but then it depends. If I know that they are very informal people, and they hate formality and it will make them feel that the therapist is very far away and speaking a different lan= I, even more, make an extra effort to use the local dialect. Eh if on the other hand, I know that they are the kind of people that need boundaries,

who need to know that the professional is there and knows what she is doing, then it's very interesting because I use the proper dialect, I use Maltese. Then with the Maltese people I always use Maltese *but* I did find myself, with clients from particular villages who have particular dialects sometimes going, ehm, sometimes even consciously, ehm, twisting a bit with the words to adjust to the client to use his language literally so they feel more understood and it's amazing sometimes it works." (**Sandra**)

Sandra constructs her use of dialect as fluid depending on the client's perceived needs. She subdivides her clients into four categories: Gozitan clients with whom she uses Maltese, Gozitan clients with whom she uses dialect, Maltese clients with whom she speaks Maltese and Maltese clients who speak in dialect with whom she uses her dialect. She uses these multiple categorisations to make linguistic therapeutic decisions that may benefit the therapeutic relationship.

When choosing to use dialect with dialect-speaking clients, Sandra positions herself as similar and informal in order to create a sense of equality and intimacy. Alternatively, she uses Maltese in order to position herself as a competent clinical psychologist able to maintain her professional stance. Of interest in this extract is the way that Gozitan dialect and Maltese have been reconstructed to occupy the positions English and Maltese were also framed as occupying. Maltese is now the language that denotes professionalism and competency; a position which English was previously framed as occupying (Section 4.2.1). Dialect is glossed as the language that promotes intersubjective and cultural understanding as is also the case for Maltese (Section 4.3.1). This repositioning of languages reflects how understandings of bilingualism may be fluid and context-dependent (Garrett, 2007; Auer, 2007).

By calling Maltese the “proper dialect”, Sandra is drawing on an ideology that perpetuates discourses around what is considered to be the correct form of speech. Both Woolard (1998) and Bailey (2007) outline how this ideology enables privileged groups to maintain the status quo of what is considered to be the right style and accent thereby resulting in the regulation of language. This creates a further power relation between regional dialects and Maltese with Maltese now constructed as the prestigious language and dialect constructed as an improper form of speech.

Although drawing from the linguistic discourse that resources understandings of what is considered proper spoken Maltese as denoted by accent and grammatical forms, Sandra is also able to resist this discourse when working with clients who she thinks might benefit from working with a professional who sounds and speaks like them. As Mökkönen (2012) argues language choice and use may be influenced by different social, familial and institutional contexts thereby resulting in varying linguistic forms being deployed according to context. This flexibility allows Sandra to adapt her register to that of the client thus allowing her to meet her client’s therapeutic needs, a consideration which has been described as central to therapy (Williams & Irving, 2002; Cofresi and Gorman, 2004).

As Garrett (2007) proposes, bilingualism is implicated in the process of the construction of subjectivity. Language becomes a resource that enables the bilingual subject to use language to construct and assert different identities within varying relationships and interactions. This account, therefore, highlights a conscious and purposeful negotiation of therapeutic interactions and relationships through code-switching. This reading of code-switching offers an understanding that goes beyond simplistic understandings of bilingualism as a problematic practice. Here code-switching is actively implicated in the creation of

multiple subjectivities (Burck, 2011) that enable the growth and development of the therapeutic relationship.

In the final extract, Anna discursively constructs code-switching as an everyday practice thus problematizing accounts of Maltese as the language associated with Maltese identity and nationalism (Section 4.3.1).

**Extract 26:** “I think the majority feel comfortable speaking in Maltese but having become quite our daily language, the sessions seem to be mostly common in a bilingual way. I mean it has become quite our everyday, our everyday language I think. We tend to speak both Maltese and English at the same time. I’m not sure how professional that would seem, to sound in a session but if the client= I mean as we were saying earlier I think the rule of thumb should be that of adapting to the client’s language.” (Anna)

This extract reflects the interaction between the discourse of English as professional language and Maltese as cultural and national language; thus embodying a hybridity of these discourses. Anna here initially discursively describes Maltese as the language of “the majority” thereby aligning herself with national ideologies that elevated Maltese to the language of Malta within the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Mallette, 2010). By later calling bilingual modes of communication, such as code-switching, the “everyday language” she questions this same discourse by acknowledging the legitimacy of bilingualism within everyday speech. This allows her to consider bilingualism as a language system within its own right (Auer, 2007) and liberates her from the binary categorisation of Maltese and English as separate languages.

Anna also questions whether it may be considered “professional” to code-switch. This stance is resourced by the discourse of English as a professional language (section 4.2) and bilingualism as deviant and interferential (section 4.4). Anna thus grapples between these two conflicting discourses and justifies her preference to communicate bilingually with clients by positioning herself as a practitioner who is able to meet the needs of her client and choose what is best for them. This position is adopted by various authors (Williams & Irving, 2002; Cofresi & Gorman, 2004) who advocate for therapists to adapt to their client's' register. She also justifies this position by discursively describing bilingualism as the norm, thereby producing a discourse that is resistant to the construction of Maltese as the national and natural language of Malta.

This discourse enables Anna to resist binary categorisations and positions associated with the use of Maltese *or* English as illustrated in sections 4.2 and 4.3, in order to creatively liberate herself from this fixed understanding to utilise a discourse of bilingualism as a legitimate form of speech whereby Maltese *and* English are simultaneously valid in therapy (Bailey, 2007). As Pujolar (2007) argues, bilingualism and practices associated with it such as code-switching and linguistic borrowing seen from this inclusive perspective thereby enable productive practices to take hold outside of linguistic boundaries previously assigned to Maltese and English. This does not signify a reduction in inequalities between languages as highlighted by oppositional constructions but that discourses surrounding bilingualism based in nationalistic ideology may no longer claim legitimacy thereby enabling alternative discourses to develop.

#### **4.5 Chapter summary**

This chapter has highlighted the multiple ways in which the category of bilingualism within the Maltese therapeutic context is presented within participants' accounts through the

discussion of discursive constructions and associated discourses. These have been situated within wider ideologies as mainly resourced by dominant monolingual ideals. A Western, ideological bias that frames bilingualism as a troubled category was shown in the way participants problematized both Maltese and English as well as the heteroglossic use of both. Participants also experienced their professional practice differently according to which language was used.

Three discourses, as summarised below, were identified and analysed. In the first discourse presented, “English: a professional discourse”, participants glossed English as the only language suitable to communicate their professional knowledge. This discourse resourced two discursive constructions. In “English as the language of professional psychology” English was constructed as the language that enables psychological understanding and thus considered best to inform therapeutic professional practices including the communication of technical terms. The use of Maltese to communicate psychological terms was constructed as unthinkable and impossible thereby marginalising it from the professional sphere (Foucault, 1977).

Participants justified this discursive construction by referring to their professional formation as occurring in educational institutes that favour the use of English thereby perpetuating the use of English in the transmission of psychological knowledge and therapeutic work. Participants described this institutional practice (Foucault, 2003) as incontestable and silenced their need to use Maltese while strengthening the professional discourse resourcing this understanding of English through their attempts to demonstrate a good standard of English. These accounts thereby demonstrate how discourse may legitimate institutional practices (Willig, 2013). As a result of this discursive construction, the creation of a professional identity built around the use of English was enabled.



Within this same discourse, a discursive construction of “English as enabling emotional precision” was also presented. In this reading, English was constituted as offering emotional precision through its varied lexicon thereby glossing English as best suited to the therapeutic practice of describing and processing emotions. English was hence presented as an objective and transparent medium to engage in an exploration of emotions for both clients and professionals while Maltese was presented as lacking and limited. This binary construction allowed participants to position themselves as enabled by the use of English, depicted as the best vehicle for emotional processing within therapy. Participants, therefore, deployed a realist understanding of emotions as universally experienced and described. This understanding minimized a consideration of the social, cultural and historical constitution of both Maltese and English and how these processes may be implicated in the expression and availability of emotional vocabulary.

In the second discourse identified, “Maltese: a cultural discourse”, Maltese was glossed as enabling intersubjective communication through the discursive construction “Maltese as enabling intimacy”. Maltese was thus privileged as a language offering emotional warmth and cultural understanding. This discursive construction may also be seen as resourced by national ideologies that privilege one language over another as reflecting the “true soul” of the Maltese subject (Hobsbawm, 1996) thereby reflecting an ideological proximity between culture and nationhood (Heller, 2007). In linking Maltese to deeper empathic attunement and communication, participants’ talk was consistent with discourses that position the Maltese language as more authentically attuned to and representative of the Maltese people themselves. This was contrasted with constructions of Maltese as vulgar and crude in the discourse “Maltese as a denigrated language”.

In this discursive construction, participants sharply and unquestioningly juxtaposed Maltese as unsophisticated and coarse in comparison to English thereby reflecting postcolonial, power relations (Stroud, 2007) that privilege English and denigrate Maltese. Participants hence evacuated the subject position of intimate practitioner strengthened by Maltese to that of inhibited practitioner, embarrassed by the crude language Maltese offers. The dualistic and oppositional cultural discourse resourcing understandings of Maltese may be located within historical understandings of Maltese as a shameful language later elevated to national language through various political processes as highlighted in Chapter Two. Acknowledging its cultural importance can thereby also be intertwined with discourses that undermine its current professional potency and relevance.

The final discourse, “Maltese-English bilingualism: a discourse of deviance”, frames practices associated with bilingualism as nonstandard practices (Heller, 2007) that muddy therapeutic communication. Participants used this discourse to resource their understandings of code-switching and translating across languages as inhibitive in the discursive constructions “Translating across Maltese and English as therapeutically disruptive” and “Code-switching as fostering inequality”. In these accounts participants’ constructed the mixing of Maltese and English as well as translation practices as threatening to their subject position as person-centred practitioners (Rogers, 1957) able to maintain an equal relationship. This discourse was especially potent when clients illustrated the use of English words with majority Maltese-speaking clients thereby reflecting an understanding of the power dynamics between Maltese and English within the Maltese context.

Alternatively, this discourse was resisted through the discursive construction of “Code-switching as a resource”. This alternative glossing of code-switching was resourced by a counter-discourse of bilingualism as a tool for communication. The mixing of Maltese and

English during therapy was hence constructed as a valid therapeutic practice for both clients and practitioners. Code-switching was glossed as purposeful and strategic thus allowing participants to fluidly create and comfortably inhabit several subject positions without being inhibited. This was presented as enhancing their abilities as practitioners in building relationships with, and understanding clients' own, bilingual uses of Maltese and English.

These discourses and related discursive constructions have underscored the complexity of bilingualism as it relates to therapeutic practice. The findings highlighted and summarised above offer a reading of the relationship between bilingualism and therapy in Malta as containing a multitude of discourses resourced by multiple and dominant ideologies. These forms of knowledge were variously implicated in the formation of varying subjectivities, thus demonstrating their constitutive power (Foucault, 1982). Hence, it may be argued, that it is crucial for counselling psychologists and other therapeutic practitioners to maintain a critical awareness of these discourses and the implications they may have for therapeutic practice. Further reflections on the critical, analytic gaze offered above will be provided in Chapter Five.

## **Chapter Five**

### **A critical discussion of the research findings**

#### **5.1 Introduction to Chapter Five**

In this final chapter a discussion of the research findings that produced one answer of many possible to the research question: How do therapeutic practitioners in Malta construct the bilingual use of Maltese and English within their therapeutic work? is offered. By applying a Foucauldian discourse analysis (FDA) to the participants' accounts of their therapeutic experiences of bilingualism, some of the diverse discursive constructions of their understandings and uses of Maltese and English were highlighted. Three main discourses emerged as resourcing these discursive constructions: "English: a professional discourse", "Maltese: a cultural discourse" and "Maltese-English bilingualism: a discourse of deviance". As argued in Chapter Four, these discourses unmasked some of the social, cultural, and historical influences on current constructions of the use of Maltese and English in therapeutic practice.

As Drewery and Monk (1994) argue, postmodern, non-essentialist modes of thought offer important implications for counselling psychology and its ability to question psychological knowledge. As is in keeping with the poststructuralist stance of this study, the analysis and findings offered do not aim to imply causality or offer a progressive solution. Rather, the value of this research may be in drawing attention to the nexus of power relations (Foucault, 1982) implicit in each discourse that could offer counselling psychologists and other practitioners' greater awareness of the complex nature of discursive constructions implicit in uses of Maltese and English in Malta, and possibly in other contexts. This study may, therefore, allow counselling psychologists to consider the multiple ways in which the category of bilingualism is presented while enabling a consideration of the wider

monolingual and postcolonial ideologies (Hernandez, 2008) resourcing these understandings. Deconstructing therapeutic truth claims about bilingualism in the Maltese therapeutic context may also encourage practitioners to gain a critical awareness of the politically and socially constituted meanings given to Maltese and English. This, it is argued, would aid their reflexivity as counselling psychologists by enabling them to challenge linguistic power relations and the potentially oppressive practices these engender rather than unknowingly perpetuate them.

In this chapter, I discuss the research findings while arguing their importance for counselling psychology and drawing attention to possible implications for practice. I also reflexively explore how this study has impacted my formation as a researcher and trainee counselling psychologist. Lastly, I evaluate this study by discussing its limitations while also considering possible future research.

## **5.2 Research findings and possible contributions to counselling psychology**

The three discourses presented in Chapter Four are considered to have resourced participant's accounts of their understandings of bilingualism within the Maltese, postcolonial and therapeutic context. This section provides an overview of the general findings of this thesis.

The professional discourse resourcing understandings of English as the language of psychology may be juxtaposed with the cultural discourse resourcing accounts of Maltese as an intimate language thereby illustrating the wider sociocultural and sociohistorical influences implicated in these constructions. In these accounts, participants offered examples of terms related to therapeutic activities that were understood as best expressed in English but also as impossible to use in Maltese (extracts 1 and 2). In contrast, the use of Maltese is

constituted as offering a more “poignant” form of expression (extract 11) or as offering warmth and understanding as demonstrated by the gendered view of Maltese offered in the term “mother tongue” (extract 12) (Jaffe, 2007; Burck, 2011). These binary understandings allowed for English to be attached to psychological knowledge while Maltese was worked up as a source of intimacy and deeper exploration of the self through its associations with communicating “the Maltese experience”. Research carried out sustains this dualistic view of languages within bilingual therapeutic practices. Psychodynamic literature (Altarriba, 2002; Kokoliari & Catanzarite, 2011) often promotes an understanding of first languages as representing deeper emotional content with second languages as representing intellectual functioning. Research carried out by Kennedy (2015) has found that Welsh-English bilingual clients felt linguistically but also culturally understood when working with therapists who could understand Welsh.

These understandings as related to Maltese in particular, offer a form of legitimacy to its use in therapy as a resource yet never allow it to be elevated to professional levels (as with English) through its exclusion from professional, psychological talk. This resonates with Camilleri’s (1996) finding that educators code-switch between English to denote professionalism and Maltese to enhance their Maltese identity. Therefore, although these findings offer an understanding of Maltese as communicating depth and profundity of emotional experience, counselling psychologists and other therapeutic practitioners are encouraged to consider the subtle diversity in roles Maltese and English are constructed as occupying and how these may limit their usage.

The discourse of English as professional language allows for the relationship between Maltese and professional psychological practice to be further talked about as inconceivable and problematic due to the difficulty in finding adequate translations of technical terms.

Examples offered by participants included “engulfing”, “stance”, “inflated” and “ego” (extract 3). This resonates with Cornforth’s (2001) argument that the term “ego” is a foreign concept to Maori culture. Translating across Maltese and English was further problematized in the discourse of bilingualism as deviant thereby highlighting the limits of the use of English vocabulary and the difficulties that may be created when faced with translating these terms into Maltese.

Participants also (extracts 18 and 19) framed their accounts of translation as linked to cultural differences that allow particular modes of thought within varying languages. These understandings may draw from a sociocultural understanding that languages do not always contain the same vocabulary as a result of cultural differences in conceptual terms. This study, therefore, highlights the need for counselling psychologists to question the assumptions they make about different languages but also to question the use of psychological knowledge constructed within Western modes of thought (Parker, 1997) and its applicability to clients from different contexts.

This may be further linked to Foucault’s (1980) assertion that language and discourse are implicated in self-knowledge by allowing or prohibiting ways of thinking about the self. Counselling psychology may be thought of as involved in this process through the language practitioners offer clients with which to resource self-understanding. The possible implication is that counselling psychologists risk becoming oppressive and colonising in their practice if the applicability of dominant, Western forms of knowledge to other cultures remains unquestioned (Drewery & Monk, 1994; Hook, 2008; Prilleltensky, 2012; Frosh, 2013; Persram, 2013). It may hence be argued that it is vital for counselling psychologists practicing both within Malta but also in other bilingual contexts to be mindful of the

hegemonic impact of Western knowledge as applied to local understandings of the psychological domain.

The professional discourse, within which constructions of English as better suited to psychology are located, was attributed to practices encouraged by training courses that promote the use of English as highlighted by Vanessa's statement in extract 5, "but it's just the way you're trained to think, is in English." Research carried out by Verdinelli and Biever (1990) also shows that bilingual Spanish-English therapists trained within the USA attributed being trained in English to their experience of effortlessly carrying out therapy in English. This finding highlights how this professional discourse is maintained through institutional practices that favour and perpetuate this discourse by offering therapeutic training in English.

Counselling psychologists are invited to question how institutional practices may be implicated in the perpetuation of a potentially uneven relationship between Maltese and English. Foucault (1981) argued that educational institutions may act as systems that perpetuate truth claims yet may also be sites where these same discourses maintained by knowledge/power are modified and challenged. As a result, it may be suggested that training courses both in Malta but also abroad, take bilingual issues into consideration. This may help to foster a greater awareness of the socio-political implications of different languages and how these may be reproduced in various ways during therapy. Such awareness may enable counselling psychologists to feel resourced when working with bilingual clients both within bilingual contexts but also within traditionally monolingual ones.

Participants offered further constructions of English and Maltese, particularly focusing on the vocabulary each language is experienced as offering. The professional discourse deployed to describe English allowed participants to construct it as best enabling the processing of emotions (extract 8) through its wider and more nuanced emotional



vocabulary. These accounts may be seen as offering realist understandings of emotions (Lupton, 2008) that do not take the sociocultural and sociohistorical constitution of emotions into account. This may render this framing of emotional language problematic when considered as true and applied across individuals from varying backgrounds.

The cultural discourse resourcing understandings of Maltese enabled participants to essentialise Maltese to a coarse language (extract 15); particularly due to the sexual and aggressive vocabulary it offers (extracts 16 and 17). The implication of this inflexible discourse for therapeutic practice may result in counselling psychologists perpetuating linguistic practices whereby particular forms of Maltese vocabulary are shut down and considered unusable. Counselling psychologists may thereby feel constrained in what they can or cannot say. Clients using such terms in Maltese may also be framed as more vulgar and treated differently to clients who may choose to use such terms in English. A continuing awareness of the power relations implicated in the discursive construction of particular Maltese vocabulary as inherently offensive may enable counselling psychologists to further reflect on how different linguistic codes and registers may engage or alienate clients from therapy, as advised by Ballinger and Wright (2007). It is proposed that counselling psychologists reconsider their understandings of emotions as essential categories best described in English to consider the varying conceptualisations Maltese has to offer. A reflexive stance may allow counselling psychologists to reframe their understandings as necessary.

These two discursive understandings that prize English and disparage Maltese, may be resourced by colonial practices that framed local languages as “native” and glossed English as a sophisticated and exemplary language (Stroud, 2007) but also by historical understandings of Maltese as a working class language (Frendo, 1991) that may still be in

circulation today (Baldacchino, 2014). It may be argued that just as working class individuals are seen as having poorer forms of speech (Snell, 2010) these constructions of Maltese as lexically and professionally limited when compared to English may be linked to such understandings. It may, therefore, be considered pertinent for counselling psychologists to examine and question how Maltese continues to be linked to social class through discourse. This may enable them to gain greater awareness of how these dynamics may be resourcing their understandings of their therapeutic work and what impact these may have on their professional practice, identity, and conceptualisations of clients who may present as mainly Maltese-speaking.

The cultural discourse also allowed participants to describe clients as “Maltese-speaking” (extract 13) as well as “English-speaking” (extract 14). The practices encouraged by these discursive constructions of clients may be understood in terms of Foucault’s (1982) work on dividing practices. The cultural discourse resourcing understandings of Maltese as the language of the Maltese people may be seen as drawing on 19th-century ideologies that associate language with national identity (Heller, 2007). The implication of this ideology is replayed within this discourse through the glossing of Maltese as the best language with which to communicate on a national level. However, this discourse was problematized by Vanessa who provided an example of the dilemmas created by the framing of Maltese as the language of the majority within group therapeutic settings. Issues of linguistic exclusion/inclusion within groups and how English-speaking clients may present a dilemma within majority Maltese-speaking groups were specifically highlighted.

Expert knowledge and sociocultural understandings of bilingualism within the Maltese context allowed for a discursive division of Maltese and English as different and irreconcilable. The classification of individuals into Maltese-speaking or English-speaking is

seen as having serious implications for therapeutic practice and results in exclusionary practices. Counselling psychologists may wish to consider how linguistic choices made when working on a community or group level may include or prohibit individuals who do not fit the category of “Maltese-speaking”.

Further implications of working with Maltese-speaking clients were provided (extracts 20 and 21) and were resourced by a discourse of Maltese-English bilingualism as deviant. Discursive constructions specifically focused on the implications of code-switching to English by therapeutic practitioners, during therapy. The introduction of English psychological terms was framed as placing the therapist at risk of perpetuating inequalities within the therapeutic relationship. This understanding resonates with Ballinger and Wright’s (2007) proposal that languages reflect differing power relations that may be replicated during therapy. It also reflects a stance that is based on a central humanistic tenet of counselling psychology that values therapist-client equality (Woolfe & Strawbridge, 2010). Counselling psychologists may engage with this finding as a means to expand their awareness of how the power relations between Maltese and English may be replayed within therapy and place the therapeutic relationship in jeopardy.

Various points of resistance to hegemonic forms of knowledge were identified. A form of resistance to the discourse “Maltese-English bilingualism: a discourse of deviance” was presented through the discursive construction of “Code-switching as a resource”. Here, participants glossed code-switching and Malta’s bilingual practices as a resource rather than a deviant practice. Participants thereby did not frame Maltese and English as separate linguistic codes that are problematic when considered alongside each other as in previous constructions, but as a form of linguistic communication that may be understood separately from dominant monolingual ideologies (Bailey, 2007). Code-switching was thereby

understood as a linguistic activity that benefits both therapists (extract 23) and clients (extract 24). Such understandings resonate with social constructionist understandings of bilingual communication (Pujolar, 2007) whereby code-switching is seen as contextually based and dependant on the interlocutors. There seems to be a paucity of psychological and therapeutic research that is able to offer a reading of bilingualism as a language in its own right. As Foucault (1980) argues, possibilities for creativity are enabled when dominant discourses are resisted and this finding may, therefore, be particularly useful at offering counselling psychologists an alternative conceptualisation of bilingualism within their practice.

The hegemony of the professional discourse constituting understandings of English was also challenged (extract 7). The counter-discourse deployed allowed for reduced importance given to English as central to therapeutic practice and offered non-verbals as more significant than linguistic communication. Such a solution may open up alternatives for action by questioning language as crucial to therapy. This alternative understanding refutes literature that emphasises the importance of taking language in therapy into account (see Seay Clauss, 1998; Ramos-Sánchez, 2007; Kokoliari & Catanzarite, 2011). It may, however, fail to consider language as a form of social practice as highlighted by this study. The discursive gaze offered by this thesis would facilitate counselling psychologists and other therapeutic practitioners to interrogate truth claims made about their practice and what power relations these counter-discourses may also perpetuate.

These findings have highlighted how these dominant discourses that enable and maintain the presented discursive constructions of Maltese-English bilingualism, may be complex, contradictory and opened up to further problematization (Benford & Gough, 2006). Truth claims may be made both knowingly and unknowingly through discourse, yet embed therapeutic knowledge within a complex network of power relations. Although this study

took place in Malta and only considered the uses of Maltese and English, these findings may draw attention to the power of circulating understandings of bilingualism within postcolonial contexts while also encouraging reflection on the dominance of English in psychological knowledge on a global level (Hobsbawm, 1996; Crystal, 2000).

Furthermore, this analysis has highlighted the link between discourse and power as particularly understood through Foucault's (1980) work on technologies of power. The construction of English as the language of professional psychology highlights the regulatory power of linguistic discourse in Malta and its role in the creation of norms that prescribe desirable conduct. Linguistic discourse perpetuated through institutional practices therefore becomes a means through which participants come to understand their professional identities through the internalisation of these forms of power (Danaher, Schirato & Webb, 2012). As this analysis has shown, this may result in the regulation of the professional self by constraining what language therapeutic practitioners feel they are able to use under different circumstances (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008).

Instances of this form of self-regulation in action with clients are illustrated in the talk of the participants who regulate themselves according to dominant discourses resourcing their understandings of the use of Maltese and English. This form of regulation may also enact disciplinary power whereby the construction of English as professional language and Maltese as cultural language framed within a wider discourse of code-switching as a deviant practice, act on the therapeutic practitioner preventing them from using Maltese and English flexibly. Yet these also highlight how sociolinguistic practices in Malta are connected to the construction of social difference.

A further illustration of self-disciplinary practices in professional formation, may be illustrated in references to Maltese as an implausible professional language. The power of this

discourse is demonstrated by internalised regulatory practices that allow individuals to monitor their use of Maltese and prohibit it from occupying an equal position to English as a suitable professional language. This form of disciplinary power is thereby shown to mobilise practices of subjugation and coercion thus emphasizing the importance of this research for counselling psychology theory and practice. It also highlights the potential of linguistic practices within institutions to act in a disciplinary manner (Foucault, 1977).

It is hoped that this analysis has underscored some salient points for counselling psychologists. It has accentuated the critical urgency of taking a questioning stance on the forms of linguistic knowledge considered correct in order to gain an increased awareness of the implicit power and regulatory practices that may be replicated within therapeutic practice. The link between power, language and the potential to oppress or silence narratives through the permissions or prohibitions fostered through discourse has been especially highlighted as worthy of note. Furthermore, it is hoped that this study can be useful to the field of psycholinguistics by providing an understanding of bilingualism within the Maltese context that not only takes into account psychological and neurobiological factors but that also considers language as couched in local meanings constructed through political and historical processes.

### **5.3 Evaluating the study**

In keeping with a poststructuralist epistemology, findings from FDA cannot be evaluated based on the material impact of the findings as in realist research; different criteria must be used (Willig, 2013). Madill et al. (2000) propose reader evaluation as one suitable criterion. In outlining the categories below my evaluation of this study's strengths and limitations are offered; the reader may provide a different one.

It is possible to evaluate this study in terms of Yardley's (2000) criteria for qualitative research. This study has demonstrated a sensitivity to context throughout by reviewing and critiquing the applicable literature. It has also consistently and adequately outlined the Maltese context thus ensuring that any analysis carried out was culturally sensitive. This study has also demonstrated commitment and rigour through in-depth engagement with both the topic of bilingualism in the Maltese therapeutic context but also through methodological competence as demonstrated in the depth of the analysis provided. Furthermore, it has maintained transparency through constant researcher reflexivity (see sections 3.5 and 5.3.3) and coherence by maintaining a poststructuralist stance throughout, making this study congruent with the methodology it employed.

Lastly, this study has enriched theoretical understandings of bilingualism by providing a sociolinguistic reading of Maltese-English bilingualism as socially constructed. It has highlighted various important implications for counselling psychologists, and other therapeutic practitioners, to consider as discussed in section 5.2. It may be therefore be concluded that this study has the potential to impact therapeutic practice in a meaningful way. This study has also accentuated the need to carry out further research into bilingualism and therapeutic practice in Malta. Future studies could focus on processes of governmentality in action by researching two different groups of participants: clients and policymakers. In the first instance, such a study may be helpful to accentuate how the discursive constructions highlighted in this study act on clients. This may indicate how power may manifest itself through the production of knowledge and discourse that may guide how bilingual clients are governed through therapeutic and institutional practices and what the implications are (Foucault, 1977). Furthermore, interviewing policymakers may increase an understanding of how linguistic policy in education in Malta impacts the practice of counselling psychology.

Specifically, an understanding of the role that institutional practices play in governing forms of knowledge regarding the use of Maltese and English at professional levels and what these may unwittingly promote or marginalize, may be useful in order to implement any necessary changes at policy level.

### **5.3.1 A critique of the methodology.**

As Willig (2013) argues, it is possible to identify limitations for each methodology. A reflexive understanding of the socially constructed nature of this study and the claims to knowledge it has made may therefore also be applied. While FDA has been utilised as a tool to highlight how discourse maintains power relations, discursive approaches to research have also been criticised for neglecting to account for the phenomenological or experiential realities of everyday life (Crossley, 2003). Offering a phenomenological analysis of bilingualism within therapy would elucidate individual meaning-making processes (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008) thereby leaving little room for a critical analysis of the role of language in the creation of the category of bilingualism in therapy as circulating within the Maltese context. Furthermore, the scope of FDA is not to understand individual narratives (Garrity, 2010) but to highlight what is enabled or constrained in diverse discursive power relations for any given individual within specific points in time. The aim of this study was to investigate **how** truths regarding bilingual therapeutic practices in Malta are constructed and perpetuated (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 1998) and it may, therefore, be argued that FDA was an appropriate methodology to achieve this goal.

Further criticism of FDA maintains that its focus on discourse and its relation to wider ideological discursive truths overlooks what the speaker is strategically doing with their talk (Burr, 2003) thus leaving little space for interactional understandings of language. The discourses and subsequent subject positions highlighted through FDA may be also seen as



unable to explain the emotional investment placed by participants in taking these up and maintaining them (Willig, 2013). The analytic interest of this study, however, was to make visible the way in which discourses are resourced by wider ideologies and understandings in order to provide a social, cultural and historical reading of how bilingualism in Maltese therapeutic practice is discursively constructed (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 1998). As Bailey (2007) suggests, outlining the sociohistorical and sociocultural constitution of bilingualism is necessary when studying heteroglossic issues; mapping the wider context through FDA was hence crucial to this research.

Nevertheless, it is proposed that future research on bilingualism and counselling psychology in Malta may consider the use of conversation analysis as a methodological framework to study bilingual interactions during therapeutic sessions. Such research might provide an understanding of the interactions and micro practices involved in the talk of both clients and counselling psychologists. It would also allow for an understanding of how bilingual talk is embodied and mobilized as a resource and practice that is produced interactionally (Mondada, 2007) by both counselling psychologists and clients. Such a study would allow for an analysis of bilingual interactions as they occur directly within the therapeutic relationship and hence provide counselling psychologists with a focused understanding of speech interactions. Such a study would also allow clients to be participants; a consideration that this study was unable to make through its focus on therapeutic practitioner's accounts as a means to make counselling psychologists aware of the power games they, as professionals, may engage in.

While several studies on bilingualism in therapy have been carried out, an argument for the need to consider this category specifically within the Maltese context was made (Chapter One). This aim has enabled the discourses highlighted by this study to be located

within Malta's specific postcolonial context. It has therefore contributed to an understanding of how specifically Maltese and English are understood and how these understandings have been shaped through various social, political and historical processes (Heller, 2007). This study has therefore contributed its own form of knowledge to the Maltese, postcolonial context (Allwood & Berry, 2006). This study has also problematized participants' understandings of bilingualism in therapy thereby offering a point of departure for divergent thinking outside current forms of knowledge (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008). Counselling psychologists and other therapeutic practitioners practicing in Malta are thereby invited to critically reflect on and contest the knowledge as well as the implications for practice offered by this study.

### **5.3.2 A critique of the participant sample.**

This study recruited a sample of nine volunteer participants. Although this sample size might be considered small, it is appropriate for qualitative research that does not aim for breadth in order to make generalizations but instead seeks to highlight the dynamics of highly focussed and specific situations (Willig, 2013). The aim of this study, as outlined in the research question: How do therapeutic practitioners in Malta construct the bilingual use of Maltese and English within their therapeutic work? was to offer fresh insights regarding therapeutic practitioners' discursive accounts of the use of Maltese and English within the Maltese postcolonial context. It may hence be argued that the sample size was sufficient to generate such discursive accounts. As Morrow (2005) further adds, what may be considered important in qualitative research within counselling psychology, is the quality and depth of interview data presented. It may be argued that nine participants provided sufficient data to enable a varied and complex data analysis and may thus be regarded as suitable for this thesis.

Although as homogeneous a sample as possible is recommended for qualitative studies (Howitt, 2013), the participants interviewed were from varied therapeutic professions and orientations. This professionally heterogeneous group informed a greater diversity of views (Kitzinger, 1994) thereby enabling participants to deploy multiple accounts. The diversity of orientations was also relevant to counselling psychology's integrative (Strawbridge & Woolfe, 2010) and pluralistic (Cooper & McLeod, 2007) stance thus allowing for a wide variety of expert knowledge to be discussed. This is in keeping with the poststructuralist stance of this study that does not aim for uniformity in order to make an essentialist claim to truth, but aims to highlight the role language plays in the constitution and maintenance of dominant forms of discourse (Willig, 2013) regarding bilingualism in Malta and therapy.

Furthermore, the sample was composed of three participants who identified as male and six who identified as female. No particular differences were noted in the way participants accounted for their experiences of bilingualism as applied to their professional practice. The cohort also described their linguistic identity in differing ways (see Table 1, Chapter Three). Once again no specific differences were noted in the way participants constructed their uses of Maltese-English bilingualism within therapeutic practice. It is proposed that further research could potentially investigate whether gender or linguistic identity are linked to different discursive accounts by specifically recruiting participants that meet such criteria. For the purpose of this study, the main criteria for participants was that they be qualified therapeutic practitioners who had experience working with both Maltese and English within the Maltese context. This participant group has therefore offered sufficient data to provide substantial findings and draw out implications for practice.

### 5.3.3 Reflexivity revisited.

As Ballinger (2003) argues the process of reflexivity may never be considered complete. As introduced in Section 3.5, reflexivity in poststructuralist forms of research such as FDA allows for recognition of how I, as the researcher, have influenced this study in manifold ways. Offering further reflections on how my subjectivity has been implicated in the research process in its entirety, is not an attempt to outline my position fully and neutrally, but to help highlight the possibility of multiple subject positions available and how I may have positioned myself differently at various points (Madill et al., 2000). This is therefore not aimed at enhancing transparency in the analysis as from a poststructuralist perspective multiple readings are possible.

Counselling psychology strongly emphasises the importance of the reflexive-practitioner (Donati, 2016) thus acknowledging the interactions between reflection and the practices counselling psychologists engage in. Reflexivity in therapeutic practice allows counselling psychologists to question established forms of knowledge. It empowers them to re-think, re-work and offer alternatives of their own interpretations of therapeutic truth claims (Drewery & Monk, 1994). In this section, I, therefore, turn a “*critical gaze*” (Finlay, 2003, p.3, emphasis author’s own) towards myself as researcher implicated in the research process. In doing this, I recognize that I have not reached an end point in my identity as a trainee counselling psychologist engaging with bilingualism, but that my identity is fluid and may shift at various points throughout my career (Drewery & Monk, 1994) as resourced by varying discourses that may become more or less influential (Weedon, 1987) within the therapeutic field.

Carrying out this study has enabled me to question my personal beliefs about how bilingualism in Malta is negotiated and constructed. I was aware that my understandings of

bilingualism shifted and changed at various points throughout this research process. Initially, I noticed that although I selected a poststructuralist stance that refutes truth claims to inform this study, I was unwittingly and unknowingly making my own truth claims about Maltese and English as they relate to therapy. When carrying out interviews, I realised that I would either find myself agreeing with participants' accounts or reacting strongly to discursive understandings I found troublesome thereby highlighting my need to recognise my own power-laden beliefs and how they might impact the analysis. At the end of this study, I recognise the need to hold and maintain a constant critical and reflexive gaze towards my beliefs about bilingualism and therapy in order to allow me to gain a nuanced understanding of how my knowledge may be contesting or joining circulating discursive truths, while also allowing me to situate them within wider discourses and ideologies. This stance is aligned with counselling psychology's reflexive-practitioner identity (Strawbridge & Woolfe, 2010) and may, therefore, be considered crucial to my ever-evolving professional development.

#### **5.4 Further research**

Suggestions for further research have already been made in this chapter. In this section, however, an additional possible research project is suggested. This study has highlighted the power relations and postcolonial remnants associated with bilingualism in Maltese therapeutic practice. As discussed in Chapter Four, participants positioned themselves as limited by the professional discourse surrounding English but also by the discourse of Maltese-English that resourced understandings of the poor suitability of Maltese for professional development due to its poorer vocabulary and lack of suitable professional terms. This has highlighted the need to further investigate the applicability of psychological and therapeutic terms to the Maltese context as well as the dominance of such terms and what

impact these may have on transforming client's narratives (Paranipe, 2002; Allwood & Berry, 2006; Prilleltensky, 2012).

Globalisation may be considered a form of colonisation (Marsella, 2012) with psychology accredited as being part of a globalising process (Prilleltensky, 2012). Studies that investigate the applicability of established truths as embodied in psychological terms used by counselling psychologists in various contexts, might contribute towards challenging the status quo of this knowledge and its ensuing exclusion of more local forms of knowledge (Cornforth, 2001; Diaz & Zirkel, 2012; Frosh, 2013).

## **5.5 Overall conclusions**

“...because language is not just a language, language is also a mirror of the culture as well...” (**Carla**)

This study has contributed towards a discursive understanding of the complex and dilemmatic category of bilingualism in therapy within the Maltese context. The value of this piece of work lies in its involvement in questioning various forms of knowledge as applied to the Maltese therapeutic scenario. It has thus contributed towards challenging and offering alternative readings of the status quo of monolingual ideological accounts of bilingualism as applied to practice. It has also outlined the impact of postcolonial practices as symbolised by the power relations identified between constructions of the use of Maltese and English fostered by sociocultural and sociohistorical understandings particular to Malta. Furthermore, this thesis has offered new perspectives on the impact of colonialism as applied to therapeutic practice in Malta by offering a fresh way of understanding bilingualism. It has also acknowledged the constellation of power relations maintaining established forms of knowledge regarding the uses of Maltese and English in therapy by highlighting the dominant

dualistic constructions of Maltese and English which continue to perpetuate an uneven power relationship between these two languages and contain the potential to silence client narratives.

This thesis has stressed the importance of questioning the practices counselling psychologists, and other therapeutic practitioners, engage in especially when faced with issues of linguistic and cultural diversity. This study, therefore, has highlighted the need for counselling psychologists to be aware of the power they hold as professionals and recognise oppressive practices which they may, knowingly or unknowingly, endorse when working in bilingual contexts or with bilingual clients. If counselling psychologists do not apply a critical gaze towards their professional practice, allowing them to reflect on the applicability of therapeutic knowledge to individuals from differing sociocultural and linguistic backgrounds, counselling psychology itself risks becoming a colonising practice.

## References

- Abela, A., Frosh, S. & Dowling, E. (2005). Uncovering beliefs embedded in culture and its implications for practice: the case of Maltese married couples. In *Journal of Family therapy*, 27, 3-23. doi: 1467-6427
- Amati Mehler, J., Argentieri, A. & Canestri, J. (1990). The babel of the unconscious. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 71, 569-583.
- Alamango, A. (2014). Music and identity in early recordings of Maltese music- 1931-32. *Melita Historica*, 16(3), 47-54.
- Alilovic, K., & Yassine, S. (2010) Working with families. In R. Woolfe, S. Strawbridge, B. Douglas & W. Dryden (Eds.), *Handbook of Counselling Psychology*, (pp. 333-353). London: Sage.
- Allwood, C.M., & Berry, J.W. (2006). Origins and development of indigenous psychologies: an international analysis. In *International Journal of Psychology*, 41(4), 243-268.
- Altarriba, J. (2002). *Bilingualism: language, memory, and applied issues*. In *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, 4(2), 1-10. doi: 10.9707/2307-0919.1034.
- Aquilina, J. (1961). *Papers in Maltese Linguistics*. Valletta: Progress Press.
- Arribas-Ayllon, M., & Walkeredine, V. (2008). Foucauldian discourse analysis. In C. Willig & W. Stainton-Rogers, (Eds.). *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, pp. 91-108. London: Sage Publications.
- Auer, P. (2007). The monolingual bias in bilingualism research, or: why bilingual talk is (still) a challenge for linguistics. In M. Heller (Ed.), *Bilingualism: a social approach* (pp. 319-339). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.



- Bailey, B. (2007). Heteroglossia and boundaries. In M. Heller (Ed.), *Bilingualism: a social approach* (pp. 257-276). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bakhtin, M.M. (1981). *The dialogic imaginations: four essays*. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press.
- Baldacchino, J. (2014, March 12). Accents, governments, and oppositions. *Maltatoday*. Retrieved from [www.maltatoday.com.mt](http://www.maltatoday.com.mt).
- Ballinger, C. (2003). Navigating multiple research identities: reflexivity in discourse analytic research. In L. Finlay & B. Gough (Eds.), *Reflexivity: A Practical Guide for Researchers in Health and Social Sciences*, (pp. 66-77). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Company.
- Ballinger, L., & Wright, J. (2007). 'Does class count?' Social class and counselling. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, 7(3), 157-163.
- Barkham, M., & Mellor-Clark, J. (2003). Bridging evidence-based practice and practice-based evidence: developing a rigorous and relevant knowledge for the psychological therapies. *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy*, 10, 319-327.
- Batten, C. (1990). Dilemmas of 'crosscultural psychotherapy supervision'. *British Journal of Psychotherapy*, 7, 129-140.
- Ben-Zeev, S. (1977). The influence of bilingualism on cognitive strategy and cognitive development. *Child Development*, 48(3), 1009-1018.
- Benford, R., & Gough, B. (2006). Defining and defending 'unhealthy' eating practices. A discourse analysis of chocolate addicts' accounts. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 11(3), 427-440.

- Bialystok, E., Craik, F. I. M., Klein, R., & Viswanathan, M. (2004). Bilingualism, aging, and cognitive control: Evidence from the Simon task. *Psychology and Aging*, 19(2), 290-303.
- Biggerstaff, A.L. & Thompson, A.R. (2008). Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA): a qualitative methodology of choice in health care research. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 5, 173-183.
- Billig, M., Gondor, S., Edwards, D., Gane, M., Middleton, D., & Radley, A.T. (1988). *Ideological Dilemmas*. London: Sage.
- Blanc, M.H.A., & Hamers, J.F. (2000). *Bilinguality and Bilingualism* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bonnici, L. (2007). Maltese English: History of use, structural variation, and sociolinguistic status. In B. Comrie, R. Fabri, E. Hume, M. Mifsud, T. Stolz & M. Vanhove. *Studies in language companion studies series 113: Introducing Maltese Linguistics*, pp. 393-414. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and symbolic power*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bowker, P., & Richards, B. (2004). Speaking the same language? A qualitative study of therapists' experiences of working in English with proficient bilingual clients. In *Psychodynamic Practices*, 10(4), 459-478. doi: 10.1080/14753630412331313695
- Brown, C. (2007). Situating knowledge and power within the therapeutic alliance. *Narrative therapy: Making meaning, making lives*, (pp. 3-22). London: Sage.

- British Psychological Society (2009). Code of ethics and conduct. Guidance published by the Ethics Committee of the British Psychological Society. Leicester: The British Psychological Society.
- Burck, C. (2011). Living in several languages: language, gender, and identities. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 18(4), 361-378. doi: 10.1177/135050681141519.
- Burr, V. (2003). *Social constructionism 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.* London: Routledge.
- Buxbaum, E. (1949). The role of a second language in the formation of ego and superego. *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 18, 279-289.
- Byford, A. (2015). Lost and gained in translation: the impact of bilingual clients' choice of language in psychotherapy. *British Journal of Psychotherapy*, 31(3), 333-347. doi:10.1111/bjp.12148.
- Calleja, G. (2014, July 10). Battling the clichés. Interviewed by Teodor Reljic. *Maltatoday*. Retrieved from [www.maltatoday.com.mt](http://www.maltatoday.com.mt).
- Callus, I. (2009). Maltese literature in the language of the other: a case study in minority literatures' pursuit of 'majority'. *Acta Scientiarum, Language and Culture*, 31(1), 31-40. Doi: 10.4025/actascilangcult.v31il.394.
- Camilleri, A. (1996). Language, values and identities: Code switching in secondary classrooms in Malta. *Linguistics and Education*, 8(1), 85-103. doi: 10.1016/S0898-5898(96)90007-8.

- Camilleri Grima, A. (2013a). A select review of bilingualism in education in Malta. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 16(5), 553-569. doi:10.1080/13670050.2012.716813.
- Camilleri Grima, A. (2013b). Language in education in Malta. Editorial. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 16(5), 529-531. doi:10.1080/13670050.2012.716813.
- Camilleri Grima, A., Buttigieg, L., & Xerri, J. (2013). Gozitan dialects in the classroom and language awareness for learner empowerment. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 16(5), 589-601. doi:10.1080/13670050.2012.716813.
- Canestri, J. & Reppen, J. (2000). Development of affect in bilingual patients. *International Journal of Psycho-analysis*, 81, 153-155.
- Carter, P.M. (2013). Poststructuralist theory and sociolinguistics: mapping the linguistic turn in social theory. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 7(11), 580-596. doi: 10.1111/lnc3.12051.
- Caruana, S. (2007). Language use and language attitudes in Malta. In D. Lasagabaster & A. Huguet (Eds.), *Multilingualism in European Bilingual Contexts: Language Use and Attitudes*, (pp. 184-207). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Cassar, J. (2014, July 7). Mixed signals. *Maltatoday*. Retrieved from [www.maltatoday.com.mt](http://www.maltatoday.com.mt).
- Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the theory of syntax*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Chomsky, N. & Foucault, M. (2006). *The Chomsky-Foucault debate: on human nature*. NY: New Press.

- Colin, B. (2013). Book and journal reviews. The APF Annual 2010: Langues et Courants Sexuels [Languages and Sexual Currents]. Edited by A. Beetschen (2010). *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 94, (pp. 841-855). doi:10.1111/1745-8315.12100.
- Cofresi, N. I., & Gorman, A.A. (2004). Testing and assessment issues with Spanish-English Bilingual Latinos. *Journal of Counselling and Development*, 82, 99-106.
- Comrie, B. (2007). Maltese and the World Atlas of Language Structures. In B. Comrie, R. Fabri, E. Hume, M. Mifsud, T. Stolz & M. Vanhove. *Studies in language companion studies series 113: Introducing Maltese Linguistics*, pp.3-11. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Cooper, M. & McLeod, J. (2007). A pluralistic framework for counselling and psychotherapy: implications for research. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, 7(3), 135-143. doi: 10.1080/14733140701566282.
- Cornforth, S. (2001). Culture: the song beyond words. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, 1(3), 194-199.
- Corrie, S. (2003). Keynote paper. Information, innovation and the quest for legitimate knowledge. *Counselling Psychology Review*, 18(3), 5-13.
- Corrie, S. (2010). What is evidence? In R. Woolfe, S. Strawbridge, B. Douglas, & W. Dryden (Eds.), *Handbook of counselling psychology 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.*, (pp. 3-22). London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Costa, B. & Dewaele, J. M. (2014). Psychotherapy across languages: beliefs, attitudes and practices of monolingual and multilingual therapists with their multilingual patients.

- Counselling and Psychotherapy Research: Linking research with practice*, 14(3), 235-244. doi: 10.1080/14733145.2013.838338.
- Couzens Hoy, D. (1988). Foucault: modern or postmodern? In J. Arac (Ed.), *After Foucault: Humanistic knowledge, postmodern challenges*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Crocket, A. (2012). Cultural safety: postcolonial counselling practice? *British journal of Guidance & counselling*, 40(3), 205-220. doi: 10.1080/03069885.2012.678286.
- Crystal, D. (1997). *English as a global language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Crystal, D. (2000). *Language death*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Davies, B., & Harré, R. (1990). Positioning: the discursive production of selves. *Journal for the theory of social behaviour*, 20(1), 43-63.
- Davies, D.R. (1999). Welsh psyche: implications for psychological services. In *International Review of Psychiatry*, 11, 197-211. doi: 0954-0261/99/02/30197-15
- de Bruin, A., Treccani, B., & Della Sala, S. (2015). The connection is in the data: we should consider them all. *Psychological Science*, 26(6), 947-949. doi: 10.1177/0956797615583443.
- de Bruin, A. & Della Sala, S. (2016, January). How biases inflate scientific evidence. *The Psychologist*, 29(1), 36-39.
- de Zulueta, F. (1990). Bilingualism and family therapy. In *Journal of Family Therapy*, 12, 255-265. doi: 0163-4445/60/030255

- Diaz, J., & Zirkel, S. (2012). Globalization, psychology and social issues research: An introduction and conceptual framework. In *Journal of Social Issues*, 68(3), 439-453.
- Dickerson, P. (2012). *Social psychology. Traditional and critical perspectives*. NY: Pearson Education.
- Donati, M. (2016). Becoming a reflective practitioner. In B. Douglas, R. Woolfe, S. Strawbridge, E. Kasket, & V. Galbraith (Eds.). *The Handbook of Counselling Psychology*, pp. 55-73. London: Sage Publications.
- Drewery, W., & Monk, G. (1994). Some reflections on the therapeutic power of poststructuralism. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 17, 303-313.
- Duncan, S. E., & De Avila Edward A. (1979). Bilingualism and cognition: Some recent findings. *NABE: the Journal of the National Association for Bilingual Education*, 4(1), 15-50.
- Du Plock, S. (2010). Humanistic approaches. In R. Woolfe, S. Strawbridge, B. Douglas & W. Dryden (Eds.), *Handbook of Counselling Psychology*, (pp. 130-150). London: Sage.
- Edley, J., & Wetherell, M. (1997). Jockeying for position: the construction of masculine identities. *Discourse & Society*, 8(2), 203-217. doi: 10.1177/0957926597008002004.
- Edu-Buandoh, D., & Otchere, G. (2012). "Speak English!" A prescription or choice of English as a lingua franca in Ghanaian schools. *Linguistics and Education*, 23, 301-309. doi: 10.1016.
- Edwards, J. (2007). Foundations of bilingualism. In T.K. Bhatia & W.C. Ritchie. (Eds.), *Handbook of bilingualism* (pp. 7-31). Oxford: Blackwell.

- Ervin, S.M. (1964). Language and T.A.T. content in bilinguals. *Journal of Abnormal Social Psychology*, 49, 139-146.
- Fanon, F. (1952). *White masks, black faces*. London: Penguin Classics.
- Fardeau, O. (1993). Franco-Italian bilingualism in early childhood and cognitive development. [Bilinguisme precoce franco-italien et developement cognitif] *Il Forneri*, 7(2), 83-99.
- Fenech, M. (2014). Maltese modernity in the visual arts: a case of cultural ruptures. *Melita Historica*, 16(3), 35-46.
- Ferguson, Charles (1964). "Diglossia". *Word*, 15, 325–340.
- Findling, J. (1969). Bilingual need affiliation and future orientation in extragroup and intragroup domains. *The Modern Language Journal*, 4, 227-231. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-4781.1969.tb07024.x.
- Finlay, L. (2003). The reflexive journey: mapping multiple routes. In L. Finlay & B. Gough (Eds.), *Reflexivity: A Practical Guide for Researchers in Health and Social Sciences*, (pp. 3-20). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Company.
- Fishman, J. (1967). "Bilingualism with and without diglossia; diglossia with and without bilingualism". *Journal of Social Issues* 23 (2), 29–38. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4560.1967.tb00573.x.
- Foucault, M. (1961). *Madness and civilization: A history of insanity in the age of reason*. New York: Random House.
- Foucault, M. (1966). *The Order of things*. New York: Tavistock Publications Ltd.



- Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge*. New York: Tavistock Publications Ltd.
- Foucault, M. (1975). *Birth of the clinic: an archaeology of medical perception*. New York: Vintage.
- Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. London: Penguin Books.
- Foucault, M. (1978). *The history of sexuality, Vol. 1*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/Knowledge. Selected writings and other interviews 1972-1977*. C. Gordon (Ed.), Toronto: Random House, Inc.
- Foucault, M. (1981). The order of discourse. In R. Young (Ed.), *Untying the text: a post-structural anthology* (pp. 48- 78). Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Foucault, M. (1982). The Subject and Power. In H. Dreyfus & P. Rabinow (Eds.), *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, (pp. 208-228). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Foucault, M. (1984). *The history of sexuality, Vol. 2: The use of pleasure*. London: Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (1986). *The history of sexuality, Vol. 3: The care of the self*. New York: Random house.
- Foucault, M. (1991). Polemics, politics, and problematizations. In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *The Foucault Reader*, pp. 381-383. London: Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (1994). An interview with Michel Foucault. In J. D. Faubion (Ed.), *Power* (Vol. 3, (pp.239–297). New York, NY: The New Press.
- Foucault, M. (2003). *Society must be defended: lectures at the Collège de France 1977-78* [Il faut défendre la société]. Paris: Gaillard and Seuil.

- Foucault, M. (2005). *The hermeneutics of the subject: lectures at the Collège de France 1977-78* [L'hermeneutique du sujet: cours au collège de France 1977-78]. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Foucault, M. (2006). *Psychiatric power: lectures at the Collège de France 1977-78* [Le pouvoir psychiatrique: cours au collège de France 1977-1978]. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Foucault, M. (2008). *The birth of biopolitics: lectures at the Collège de France 1977-78* [Naissance de la biopolitique: cours au collège de France 1977-78]. Basingstoke: Palgrave: Macmillan.
- Frendo, H. (1991). *Party politics in a fortress colony: the Maltese experience*. Valletta, Malta: Midsea Publication Ltd.
- Frendo, H. (2008). Pressures on assumed identity at the border. Malta in Europe, Empire and Mediterranean. In M. Petricoli (Ed.), *L'Europe Méditerranéenne* (pp.202-226). Brussels, Belgium: Peter Lang.
- Frendo, H. (2014). Change and continuity in Malta from 1964 onwards: a general overview. *Melita Historica*, 16(3), p. 11-16.1
- Freshwater, D. (2007). Discourse, responsible research and positioning the subject. Editorial. *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing*, 14, 111-112.
- Freud, S. & Breuer, J. (1895). *Studies in Hysteria*. London: Hogarth Press.
- Frosh, S. (2013). Psychoanalysis, colonialism, and racism. In *Journal of theoretical and philosophical psychology*, 33(3), 141-154.

- Fuertes, J.N. (2004). Supervision in bilingual counseling: service delivery, training, and research considerations. In *Journal of Multicultural Counselling and Development*, 32, 84-94.
- Garrett, P.B. (2007). Language socialization and the (re)production of bilingual subjectivities. In M. Heller (Ed.), *Bilingualism: a social approach*, (pp. 233-256). NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Garritty, Z. (2010). Discourse analysis, Foucault and social work research: identifying some methodological complexities. *Journal of Social Work*, 10(2), 193-210. doi: 10.1177/1468017310363641.
- Gee, J. P., Allen, A.R., & Clinton, K. (2001). Language, class, and identity: teenagers fashioning themselves through language. *Linguistics and Education*, 12(2), 175-194.
- Georgiou, L. (2014). 'My language thing... is like a big shadow always behind me': International counselling trainees' challenges in beginning clinical practice. *Counselling and psychotherapy research*, (14)1, 10-18. doi: 10.1080/14733145.2013.770896.
- Gergen, K. J. (1990). Towards a postmodern psychology. *The Humanistic Psychologist*, 18(1), 23-34. doi:10.1080/08873267.1990.9976874
- Gergen, K.J. (2001). *Social construction in context*. London: Sage.
- Goldstein, R. (2010). The future of counselling psychology. In R. Woolfe, S. Strawbridge, B. Douglas, & W. Dryden (Eds.), *Handbook of counselling psychology 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.*, (pp. 3-22). London: Sage Publications Ltd.

- Goncalves, O.F., & Machado, P. (2000). Emotions, narrative and change. *The European Journal of Psychotherapy, Counselling, and Health*, 13(3), 349-360. doi: 10.31080/13642530010012002
- Gough, B. (2003). Deconstructing reflexivity. In L. Finlay & B. Gough (Eds.), *Reflexivity: A Practical Guide for Researchers in Health and Social Sciences*, (pp.21-35). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Company.
- Graham, L. (2005, November 21). *Discourse analysis and the critical use of Foucault*. Paper presented at The Australian Association for Research in Education Annual Conference.
- Greenson, R. R. (1950). The mother tongue and the mother. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 31, 18–23.
- Grosjean, F., Li, P., & Bialystok, E. (2013). *The Psycholinguistics of Bilingualism*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Hakuta, K. (1985). *Cognitive development in bilingual instruction*. In Issues in English language development (pp. 63-67), Rosslyn, Va.: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education.
- Hammersley, M. (2007). Issues of quality in qualitative research. *International Journal of Research and Method in Education*, 30(3), 287-305. doi: 10.1080/17437270701614782.
- Harré, R. & Davis, B. (1991). Positioning: the social construction of selves. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 20(1), 43-63.
- HCPC (2016) Standards of conduct, performance, and ethics.<http://www.hcpc-uk.org/publications/standards/index.asp?id=38f>

- Heelas, P. (2007). Emotion talk across cultures. In H. Wulff (Ed.), *The emotions: a cultural reader* (pp. 31-36). Oxford: Berg.
- Heller, M. (2007). Bilingualism as ideology and practice. In M. Heller (Ed.), *Bilingualism: a social approach* (pp. 1-22). NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Heller, M. (2008). Language and the nation-state: challenges to sociolinguistic theory and practice. In *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 12(4), 504-524.
- Helmer, K.A. (2013). A twice-told tale: voices of resistance in a borderlands Spanish heritage language class. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 44(3), 269-285. doi: 10.1111/aeq.12025.
- Hernandez, P. (2008). The cultural context model in clinical supervision. In *Training and education in professional psychology*, 2(1), 10-17.
- Hobsbawm, E. (1996). Language, culture and national identity. *Social research*, 63(4), 1065-1080.
- Holliday, A. (2006). Native-speakerism. *ELT Journal*, 60(4), 385-387. doi: 10.1093/elt/ccl030.
- Hook, D. (2001). Discourse, knowledge, materiality, history. Foucault and discourse analysis. *Theory and Psychology*, 11(4), 521-547.
- Hook, D. (2008). Postcolonial psychoanalysis. *Theory and psychology*, 18(2), pp.269-283. doi: 10.1177/095935430787886
- Hook, D. & Truscott, R. (2013). Fanonian ambivalence: on psychoanalysis and postcolonial critique. *Journal of theoretical and philosophical psychology*, 33(3), 155-169.

Howitt, D. (2013). *Introduction to qualitative methods in psychology* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Harlow, Cambridge: Pearson Education.

University of Malta (2015). <http://www.um.edu.mt/socialwellbe/g/overview/PMPSYCOPFTT2-2015-6-O>. Accessed 15/10/15.

University of Malta (2015).<https://www.um.edu.mt/socialwellbeing/psychology/about>. Accessed 15/10/15.

Huygens, I. (2009). From colonisation to globalization: continuities in colonial ‘common sense’. In D. Fox & I. Prilleltensky (Eds.), *Critical psychology: an introduction*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (pp. 267-284). London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Imberti, P. (2007). Who resides behind the words? Exploring and understanding the language experience of the non-English-speaking immigrant. *Families in Society: the Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 88(1), 67-73. doi: 10.1606/1044-3894.3593.

Ivers, N.N., Ivers Sr, J.J., & Duffey, T. (2013). Second language acquisition: cultural, cognitive and clinical considerations for counselling practice. *Journal for Creativity in Mental Health*, 8, 219-234. doi:10.1080/15401383.2013.821920.

Jaffe, A. (2007). Minority language movements. In M. Heller (Ed.), *Bilingualism: a social approach*, (pp. 50-70). NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

James, P. (2016). Counselling psychology and its international dimensions. In B. Douglas, R. Woolfe, S. Strawbridge, E. Kasket, & V. Galbraith (Eds.). *The Handbook of Counselling Psychology*, pp. 399-414. London: Sage Publications.

- Kagan, C., Tindall, C. & Robinson, J. (2010). Community psychology: linking the individual with the community. In R. Woolfe, S. Strawbridge, B. Douglas & W. Dryden (Eds.), *Handbook of Counselling Psychology*, (pp.484-503). London: Sage.
- Kennedy, V. (2015). The role and impact of the ‘mother tongue’ in counselling. In P. Madsen Gubi (Ed.), *Listening to less-heard voices: developing counsellor’s awareness*, (pp.235-279). Chester: University of Chester.
- Kitzinger, J. (1994). The methodology of focus groups: the importance of interaction between research participants. *The Journal of Sociology, Health and Illness*, 16(1), 103-121.
- Kokoliari, E., & Catanzarite, G. (2011). Understanding the role of language in bilingual psychotherapy: clinical implications [Abstract]. In *Psychiatry Praxis*, 38(18), doi: 10.1055/s-0031-1277822.
- Krapf, E. (1955). The choice of language in polyglot psychoanalysis. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 24, 343–357.
- Krug, M. & Rosen, A. (2012). Standards of English in Malta and the Channel Islands. In R. Hickey (Ed.), *Standards of English: codified varieties around the world*, (pp. 117-138). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Language Education Policy Profile Malta (March, 2015). Council of Europe, Strasbourg. [https://education.gov.mt/en/resources/Documents/Policy%20Documents/Profile-Malta\\_final2015\\_EN.pdf](https://education.gov.mt/en/resources/Documents/Policy%20Documents/Profile-Malta_final2015_EN.pdf).
- Laungani, P. (2004). Counselling and therapy in a multicultural setting. *UK Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 17(2), 195-207. doi: 10.1080/09515070410001428262.

- Leeman, J., Rabin, L., & Ramon-Mendez, E. (2011). Identity and activism in heritage language education. *The Modern Language Journal*, 95(5), 481-495. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-4781.2011.01237.x
- Lippi-Green, R. (1997). English with an accent. Language, ideology and discrimination in the United States: NY: Routledge.
- Lupton, D. (1998). *The emotional self: a sociocultural exploration*. London: Sage Publications.
- Lutz, C. A. (2007). Emotion, thought and estrangement: emotion as a cultural category. In H. Wulff (Ed.). *The emotions: a cultural reader* (pp. 19-30). Oxford: Berg.
- Lyngra, M. (2011). Lost and found in translation: therapy and the bilingual self. In F. Fowlie & C. Sills (Eds.), *Relational Transactional Analysis*, (pp. 199-209). London: Karnac Books
- Macleod, C., & Bhatia, S. (2008). Postcolonialism and Psychology. In C. Willig & W. Stainton-Rogers (Eds.). *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research in Psychology*. London: Sage Publications,
- MacRuairc, G. (2011). They're my words- I'll talk how I like! Examining social class and linguistic practice among primary-school children. In *Language and Education*, (25)6, 535-559. doi: 10.1080/09500782.2011.602411
- Macswain, J. (2007). Code-switching and grammatical theory. In T.K. Bhatia & W.C. Ritchie. (Eds.), *Handbook of bilingualism* (pp. 282-378). Oxford: Blackwell.



- Madill, A., Jordan, A., & Shirley, C. (2000). Objectivity and reliability in qualitative analysis: realist, contextualist, and radical constructionist epistemologies. *British Journal of Psychology*, 91, 1, 1–20.
- Mallette, K. (2010). *European modernity and the Arab Mediterranean: toward a new philology and counter-orientalism*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania.
- Malson, H. (1999). *The thin woman: feminism, post-structuralism and the social psychology of anorexia nervosa*. London: Routledge.
- Marcos, L.R. (1976). Bilinguals in psychotherapy: language as an emotional barrier. *Journal of Psychotherapy*, 30, 552-560.
- Marcos, L.R., & Urcuyo, L. (1979). Dynamic psychotherapy with the bilingual patient. In *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, 33(3), 331-338.
- Martin-Jones, M. (2007). Bilingualism, education and the regulation of access to language resources. In M. Heller (Ed.), *Bilingualism: a social approach*, (pp. 161-182). NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Martín Alcoff, L. (2013). Foucault's Normative Epistemology. In C. Falzon (Ed.), *A Companion to Foucault*, (pp.249-267). Chichester West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing Limited.
- Marsella, A. (2012). Psychology and globalization: understanding a complex relationship. In *Journal of Social Issues*, 68(3), 454-472.
- McDonald, M., & O'Callaghan, J. (2008). Positive psychology: a Foucauldian critique. *The Humanistic Psychologist*, 36, 127-142. doi: 10.1080/08873260802111119.

- McLeod, J. (2011). *Qualitative research in counselling and psychology*. London: Sage.
- Mecchelli, A., Crinion, J.T., Noppeney, U., O'Doherty, J., Ashburner, J., Fackowiak, R.S., Price, C.J. (2004). Structural plasticity in the bilingual brain. *Nature*, 431, 757.
- Mearns, D. & Thorne, B. (2007). *Person-Centred Counselling in Action* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed). London: Sage Publications.
- Milner, J. & O'Byrne, P. (2004). *Assessment in counselling: theory, process, and decision-making*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Moane, G. (1994). Psychological analysis of colonialism in an Irish context. In *The Irish Journal of Psychology*, 15(2), 250-265.
- Mökkönen, A.C. (2012). Social organization through teacher-talk: subteaching, socialization and the normative use of language in a multilingual primary class. *Linguistics and Education*, 23(3), 310-322. doi:10.1016/j.linged.2012.06.001.
- Mondada, L. (2007). Bilingualism and the analysis of talk at work. In M. Heller (Ed.), *Bilingualism: a social approach*, (pp. 297-316). NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Moore, L., & Seu, B. (2010). 'Doing family therapy': a Foucauldian discourse analysis. *European Journal of Psychotherapy and Counselling*, 12(4), 323-343. doi: 10.1080/13642537.2010.530083.
- Morrow, S.L. (2005). Quality and trustworthiness in qualitative research in counseling psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52(2), 250-260. doi: 10.1037/0022-0167.52.2.250.

- Netto, G. (2006). Creating a suitable space: a qualitative study of the cultural sensitivity of counselling provision in the voluntary sector in the UK. *Journal of Mental Health*, 15(5), pp. 593-604. doi: 10.1080/0963820600900132.
- Nguyen, B.P. (2013). Identification: a qualitative study of the experiences of bilingual therapists with their monolinguals and bilingual clients. *Psychodynamic Practice*, 20(4), 340-355. doi: 10.1080/14753634.2014.947168.
- Norcross, J. (2000). Clinical versus counselling psychology: what's the diff? *Eye on Psi Chi*, 5(1), 20-22.
- O'Brien, M. (2010). Towards integration. In R. Woolfe, S. Strawbridge, B. Douglas & W. Dryden (Eds.), *Handbook of Counselling Psychology*, (pp.85-104). London: Sage.
- Pace, M. (2005). *The politics of regional identity: meddling with the Mediterranean*. NY: Routledge.
- Paranipe, A.C. (2002). Indigenous psychology in the post-colonial context: a historical perspective. In *Psychology and developing societies*, 14(1), 27-45. doi: 10.1177/097133360201400103
- Parker, I. (1992). *Discourse Dynamics*. London: Routledge.
- Parker, I. (1997). *Culture: psychoanalytic discourse in Western society*. London: Sage.
- Parker, I. (1998). Constructing and deconstructing psychotherapeutic practice. *European Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy*, 1(1), 65-78. doi: 10.1080/13642539808400506.

- Patrick, D. (2007). Language endangerment, language rights, and indigeneity. In M. Heller (Ed.), *Bilingualism: a social approach*, (pp. 111-135). NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Pattison, S., Rowland, N., Richards, K., Cromarty, K., Jenkins, P., & Polat, F. (2009). School counselling in Wales: recommendations for good practice. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research: linking research with practice*, 9(3), 169-173. doi: 10.1080/14733140903169315
- Pavlenko, A. (2006). Bilingual selves. In A. Pavlenko (Ed.), *Bilingual minds: emotional experience, expression, and representation* (pp. 1-33). Retrieved from <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/roehampton>.
- Peal, E., & Lambert, W. E. (1962). The relation of bilingualism to intelligence. *Psychological Monographs*, 76(27), 23.
- Pérez Foster, R. (1996). The bilingual self: duet in two voices. *Psychoanalytic dialogues*, 6, 99-121.
- Persram, N. (2013). Introduction: special issue on postcoloniality and subjectivity. In *Journal of theoretical and philosophical psychology*, 33(3), 135-140.
- Petrica, M. (2011). "Overt" vs. "covert" cultural variance in metaphor usage: 'Europe' vs. Malta and the EU-membership debate. In S. Handl & H-J. Schmidt (Eds.), *Windows to the mind. Metaphor, metonymy, and conceptual blending*, (pp. 143-166). Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Pliatsikas, C., Moschopoulou, E., & Saddy, J.D. (2015). The effects of bilingualism on the white matter structure of the brain. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences United States of America*, 112(5), 1134-1137. doi: 10.1073/pnas.1414183112.

- Polanco, M. (2010). Rethinking narrative therapy: an examination of bilingualism and magical realism. In *Journal of Systemic Therapies*, 29(2), 1-14.
- Prilleltensky, I. (2012). The what, why, who and how of globalization: what is psychology to do? In *Journal of social issues*, 68(3), 612-629.
- Pujolar, J. (2007). Bilingualism and the nation-state in the post-national era. In M. Heller (Ed.), *Bilingualism: a social approach* (pp. 71-95). NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rabate, J. (2003). Introduction 2003: are you history? In J. Sturrock. (Ed.), *Structuralism* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), (pp. 1-18). London: Blackwell.
- Ramos-Sanchez, L. (2007). Language switching and Mexican Americans' emotional expression. In *Journal of Multicultural Counselling and Development*, 35, (155-168).
- Rebuscat, P. & Williams, J. (2012). *Studies in second language and foreign language education (SSFLE): statistical learning and language acquisition*. Boston, MA: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Rizq, R. (2010). Psychodynamic approaches. In R. Woolfe, S. Strawbridge, B. Douglas & W. Dryden (Eds.), *Handbook of Counselling Psychology*, 85-104. London: Sage.
- Rogers, C. (1957). The necessary and sufficient conditions to bring about therapeutic personality change. *Journal of Consulting Psychology*, 21, 95–103.
- Rose, N. (1985). *The psychological complex*. London: Routledge & Keegan Paul.
- Rozenky, R. H., & Gomez, M. Y. (1983). Language switching in psychotherapy with bilinguals: Two problems, two models, and case examples. *Psychotherapy*, 20, 152–260.

- Said, E.W. (1978). *Orientalism*. NY: Vintage Books.
- Samuels, A. (2014). Political and clinical developments in analytical psychology, 1972-2014: subjectivity, equality and diversity- Inside and outside the consulting room. *The Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 59(5), 641-660.
- Sanders, D. (2010). Cognitive and behavioural approaches. In R. Woolfe, S. Strawbridge, B. Douglas & W. Dryden (Eds.), *Handbook of Counselling Psychology*, (pp.105-129). London: Sage.
- Santiago-Rivera, A.L. and Altarriba, J. (2002). The role of English in therapy with the Spanish-English bilingual client. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 33(1), 30-38. doi:0.1037//0735-7028.33.1.30.
- Santiago-Rivera, A. L., Altarriba, J, Poll, N., Gonzalez-Miller, N., & Cragun, C. (2009). Therapists' views on working with bilingual Spanish–English-speaking clients: a qualitative investigation. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 40(5), 436-443. doi: 10.1037/a0015933.
- Saxena, M. (2009). Construction and deconstruction of linguistic otherness: conflict and cooperative code-switching in bilingual classrooms. In *English teaching: practice and critique*, 8(2), 167-187.
- Schirato, T., Danaher, G., & Webb, J. (2012). *Understanding Foucault. A critical introduction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Sage.
- Sciarra, D.T., & Ponterotto, J.G. (1991). Counseling the Hispanic bilingual family: challenges to the therapeutic process. In *Psychotherapy*, 28(3), 473-479.

- Sciriha, L. (2002). The rise of Maltese in Malta: social and educational perspectives. In *Intercultural communication studies*, 11(3), 95-106.
- Seale, C. (1999). Quality in qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 5(4), 465-478.doi: 10.1177/107780049900500402.
- Seay Clauss, C. (1998). Language: the unspoken variable in psychotherapy practice. In *Psychotherapy*, 35(2), 188-196.
- Silcock, C. (2013). Constructing self-harm at the turn of the twenty-first century: a Foucauldian discourse analysis. In C. Willig. *Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Appendix 3, pp. 222-235. London: Sage.
- Skinner, B. F. (1957). *Verbal behaviour*. Acton, MA: Copley Publishing Group.
- Snell, J. (2010). From sociolinguistic variations to socially strategic stylisation. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 14(5), 630-656.
- Softas-Nall, L., Cardona, B., & Barritz, J. (2015). Challenges and diversity issues working with multilingual and bilingual couples and families: implications for counselling. *The Family Journal: Counseling and therapy for Couples and Families*, 23(1), 13-17. doi: 10.1177/1066448071458402.
- Song, J. (2012). The struggle over class, identity, and language: a case study of South Korean transnational families. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 16(2), 201-217.
- Spivak, G.C. (1988). Can the subaltern speak? In C. Nelson. & L. Grossberg (Eds.), *Marxism and the interpretation of culture*, (pp. 271-313). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Spong, S. (2010). Discourse analysis: rich pickings for counsellors and therapists. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, 10(1), 67-74. doi: 10.1080/14733140903177052.
- Stahl, B. C. (2004). Whose discourse? A comparison of the Foucauldian and Habermasian concepts of discourse in critical IS research. *AMCIS 2004 Proceedings*, 538.
- Stanley, P. (2013). Defining counselling psychology: what do all the words mean? *New Zealand Journal of Psychology*, 42(3), 27-34.
- Strawbridge, S., & Woolfe, R. (2010). Counselling psychology: origins, developments, and challenges. In R. Woolfe, S. Strawbridge, B. Douglas, & W. Dryden (Eds.), *Handbook of counselling psychology 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.*, (pp. 3-22). London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Stevens, S., & Holland, P. (2008). Counselling across a language gap: the therapist's experience. *Counselling Psychology Review*, 23(3), 15-23.
- Stroud, C. (2007). Bilingualism: colonialism and postcolonialism. In M. Heller (Ed.), *Bilingualism: a social approach* (pp. 25-49). NY York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Sturrock, J. (2003). *Structuralism (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*. London: Blackwell.
- Tabouret-Keller, A. (2007). English summary of Tabouret-Keller's postface politics and ideology: the case of bilingualism. In M. Heller (Ed.), *Bilingualism: a social approach* (pp. 357-358). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Tehrani, N., & Vaughan, S. (2009). Lost in translation: using bilingual differences to increase emotional mastery following bullying. In *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, 9(1), 11-17. doi: 10.1080/14733140802656131.



- Thatcher, M., & Manktelow, K. (2007). The cost of individualism. *Counselling Psychology Review*, 22(4), 31-42.
- Thomas, L.K. (2013). Empires of mind: colonial history and its implications for counselling and psychotherapy. *Psychodynamic practice: individuals, groups, and organisations*, 19(2), 117-128. doi: 10.1080/14753634.2013.778484.
- Tsitsipis, L.D. (2007). Bilingualism, praxis and linguistic description. In M. Heller (Ed.), *Bilingualism: a social approach*, (pp. 277-296). NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Tummala-Narra, P. (2016). *Psychoanalytic theory and cultural competence in psychotherapy*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Vaid, J. (1986). Preface. In J. Vaid (Ed.), *Language Processing in Bilinguals: Psycholinguistic and Neuropsychological Perspectives*. (pp. 12-15). Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc.
- Van Scoyoc, S. (2010). The collaborative use of psychometric assessment. In R. Woolfe, S. Strawbridge, B. Douglas & W. Dryden (Eds.), *Handbook of Counselling Psychology*, (pp. 611-629). London: Sage.
- Vella, A. (2003). Language contact and Maltese intonation: some parallels with other language varieties. In K. Braunmüller & G. Ferraresi (Eds.), *Aspects of multilingualism in European language history* (pp. 261-284). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Co.
- Vella, A. (2013). Languages and language varieties in Malta. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 16(5), 532-552. doi: 10.1080/13670050.2012.716812.

- Verdinelli, S., & Biever, J.L. (1990). Spanish-English bilingual psychotherapists: personal and professional language development and use. *Journal of Latino/a Psychology*, 1(4), pp. 227-242.doi: 10.1037/1at0000004.
- Villalba Jr., J.A. (2007). Culture-specific assets to consider when counseling Latino/a children and adolescents. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 35, 15-25.
- Wallis, T. (2004). Psychological tests do not measure what they claim to measure: a reevaluation of the concept of construct validity. In *South African Journal of Psychology*, 34(1), 101-112.
- Walton, C. (2007). Doing discourse analysis. In E. Lyons and A. Coyle (Eds.). *Analysing qualitative data in psychology*, pp. 117-130. London: Sage Publications.
- Weedon, C. (1987). *Feminist practice and poststructuralist theory*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Welsh, C., & Piekkari, R. (2006). Crossing language boundaries: Qualitative interviewing in international business. *Management International Review*, 46(4), 417-437.
- Westbrook, D., Kennerly, H., Kirk, J. (2011). An introduction to cognitive behavior therapy. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). London: Sage.
- Wetherell, M. & Potter, J. (1993). *Mapping the language of racism: discourse and the legitimation of exploitation*. Hemel-Hempstead-UK: Harvester-Wheatsheaf.
- Wetherell, M. & Potter, J. (1995). Discourse analysis. In J.A. Smith, R. Harré., & L. Van Lagenhove (Eds.), *Rethinking methods in psychology*. London: Sage.

- Wettinger, G. (1988). The nature of Maltese politics, c. 870-1964. In V. Mallia-Milanes (Ed.), *The British Colonial Experience 1800-1964: The Impact on Maltese Society* (pp.19-33). Msida, Malta: Mireva Publications.
- Woolard, K. A. (1998). Introduction: language ideology as a field of inquiry. In B.B. Scheiffelin, K.A. Woolard, P.V. Kroskrity (Eds.), *Language ideologies: practice and theory*, (pp.3-50). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Woolfe, R. (2016). Mapping the world of helping: The place of counselling psychology. In B. Douglas, R. Woolfe, S. Strawbridge, E. Kasket, & V. Galbraith (Eds.). *The Handbook of Counselling Psychology*, pp. 5-19. London: Sage Publications.
- Woolfe, R., & Tholstrup, M. (2010). Supervision. In R. Woolfe, S. Strawbridge, B. Douglas & W. Dryden (Eds.), *Handbook of Counselling Psychology*, (pp. 590-608). London: Sage.
- Williams, D.I. & Irving, J.A. (2002). Universes of discourse: implications for counselling and psychotherapy. In *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 30(2), 207-212. doi: 10.1080/03069880220128065.
- Willig, C. (2013). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.)*. Maidenhead, Berkshire: Open University Press.
- Yardley, L. (2000). Dilemmas in qualitative health research. *Psychology and Health*, 15, 215-228.
- Young, R.F. & Astarita, A.C. (2013). Practice theory in language learning. *Language Learning*, 63(1), 171-189. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9922.2012.00743.x.

Zhang, D. (2012). Co-ethnic network, social class, and heritage language maintenance among Chinese immigrant families. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, 11, 200-223.

## Appendix A- Letter of invitation



London

### LETTER OF INVITATION

#### **Bilingualism in the therapy room: exploring bilingual practices in Malta**

My name is Michela and I am in my second year of my Doctorate in Counselling Psychology in the Department of Psychology at the University of Roehampton, London, UK. As part of my studies, I am conducting a qualitative research study exploring bilingualism in therapeutic settings with clients in Malta.

This research is supervised by Dr. Jean O'Callaghan [j.ocallaghan@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:j.ocallaghan@roehampton.ac.uk) and co-supervised by Dr Paul Dickerson [paul.dickerson@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:paul.dickerson@roehampton.ac.uk).

I plan to interview counselling psychologists, clinical psychologists, integrative counsellors and psychotherapists on their experiences of working with clients using Maltese and English.

If you would like to participate in this study, this will involve meeting for an informal interview with me for approximately 60 minutes. It will be held in English but you will be able to switch to Maltese where appropriate. The interview will be recorded (audio) however your personal details will be kept anonymous and the interview will be confidential. The interview will cover the following issues:

- You will be invited to talk about how you trained as a therapeutic practitioner.
- We will explore your client work, both in the past and present, particularly in relation to the role of language in facilitating change.
- We will then focus on your particular experiences in working with clients in both English and Maltese, what has been helpful, and if there are any struggles in facilitating the work that would be of interest to this research.

Following our meeting:

- I will send you a transcript of your interview and you are welcome to provide feedback to ensure an accurate account.
- I hope you will find the process of reflecting on your work of interest to you and I guarantee that the content will remain confidential and your identity anonymous, within ethical guidelines (confidentiality would only be breached if you talked harm to self or others!).

Please email me if you would like to take part or if you have any questions about the study on [galeabom@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:galeabom@roehampton.ac.uk).

Michela Galea Bonavia  
University of Roehampton  
Department of Psychology  
Whitelands College  
Holybourne Avenue  
London SW15 4JD  
+44 07933677198

## Appendix B- Participant consent form



### PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

**Title of Research Project:** Bilingualism in the therapy room: exploring bilingual practices in Malta.

**Brief description of the study:** this qualitative study will explore bilingualism in therapeutic settings with clients in Malta. In order to collect data 10 interviews with counselling/clinical psychologists, integrative psychotherapists and counsellors will be carried out. Each interview should last for approximately one hour.

All interviews will be held at a location (such as professional workspace) and a time that is convenient to you. Your interview will be audio-recorded and only the researcher and her supervisors will listen to it. You will be able to stop the interview at any point and withdraw from the study without giving any reason by contacting me on the details given below.

Your confidentiality shall be maintained throughout the process. The digital record will be kept in encrypted form on a password protected USB stick and the transcript will be stored separately to any identifying information. Your identity will be protected and any identifying details will be removed from the interview transcripts and any extracts that appear in the final written report or any future publication. Confidentiality shall only be broken should I have concerns about your safety or that of anyone else according to the British Psychological Society's ethical guidelines.

Before the research is concluded, you will be given a transcript of the interview to read and will have the opportunity to provide any feedback should you wish.

**Investigator Contact Details:**

Michela Galea Bonavia  
Department of Psychology  
University of Roehampton  
Whitelands College  
Holybourne Avenue  
London SW15 4JD  
galeabom@roehampton.ac.uk  
+44 07933677198

**Consent Statement:**

I agree to take part in this research and am aware that I am free to withdraw at any point without giving a reason, although if I do so I understand that my data might still be used in a collated form. I understand that the information I provide will be treated in confidence by the investigator and that my identity will be protected in the publication of any findings, and that data will be collected and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and with the University's Data Protection Policy.

Name .....

Signature .....

Date .....

Please note: if you have a concern about any aspect of your participation or any other queries please raise this with the investigator (or if the researcher is a student you can also contact the Director of Studies.) However, if you would like to contact an independent party please contact the Head of Department.

**Director of Studies Contact Details:**

Dr Jean O'Callaghan  
School of Human and Life Sciences  
Roehampton University  
Whitelands College  
Holybourne Avenue  
London SW15 4JD

Email: [j.ocallaghan@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:j.ocallaghan@roehampton.ac.uk)  
Tel: +44 (0)20 83923624

**Head of Department Contact Details:**

Dr Diane Bray  
School of Human and Life Sciences  
Roehampton University  
Whitelands College  
Holybourne Avenue  
London SW15 4JD

Email: [d.bray@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:d.bray@roehampton.ac.uk)  
Tel: +44 (0) 20 8392 3627

## Appendix C- Participant Debrief form



### PARTICIPANT DEBRIEF FORM

#### **Bilingualism in the therapy room: exploring bilingual practices in Malta.**

Thank you very much for taking part in this study, your contribution is greatly appreciated.

Finally, you are required to sign to confirm that the following procedures have taken place:

- I confirm that this interview has been conducted in a professional and ethical manner
- I am aware that I can read and comment on the transcript provided to me by the researcher.
- I have been informed that all data gathered during this study will be held securely and anonymously and only the researcher and her supervisors will have access to the data.
- I know that any quotes from my transcript that will be used in the study or any future publications will be completely anonymised.

Name .....Researcher's name.....

Signature .....Signature.....

Date .....Date.....

**Please note:** if you have a concern about any aspect of your participation or any other queries please raise this with the researcher. However, if you would like to contact an independent party please contact the Head of Department or the Director of Studies.

#### **Researcher**

Michela Galea Bonavia  
Department of Psychology  
Whitelands College  
University of Roehampton  
Holybourne Avenue  
London SW15 4JD

[galeabom@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:galeabom@roehampton.ac.uk)

Tel: +44 (0) 7933677198

#### **Director of Studies**

Dr. Jean O'Callaghan  
Department of Psychology  
Whitelands College  
University of Roehampton  
Holybourne Avenue  
SW15 4JD

[j.ocallaghan@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:j.ocallaghan@roehampton.ac.uk)

Tel: +44 (0)20 83923624

#### **Head of Department**

Dr. Diane Bray  
Department of Psychology  
Whitelands College  
University of Roehampton  
Holybourne Avenue  
SW15 4JD

[d.bray@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:d.bray@roehampton.ac.uk)

Tel: +44 (0)20 8392 3627

If you have found any aspect of the interview to require more exploration, you may wish to discuss it with your personal therapist or a colleague. You may also contact Supportline run by Aġenzija Appoġġ on 179.



## **Appendix D- Interview Schedule**

### Interview Schedule

1. Could you talk to me about your training and work experience?
  - a. On a personal level would you describe yourself as being bilingual or using English/Maltese more?
  - b. What was the main language used during your training?
  - c. How would you describe your theoretical orientation?
  - d. What benefits and constraints do you experience when working in Maltese or English?
  - e. What kinds of client groups do you have experience working with?
  - f. What language is used mainly in your supervision?
  
2. Do you perceive Maltese/English as an adequate language for use in therapy?  
Any examples?
  - a. Do you think that the language used makes a difference in therapy?
  - b. Do you think that Maltese offers enough vocabulary to work therapeutically?
  - c. Do you find it easier to empathise in English or Maltese?
  
3. Do you find any differences when working in English-speaking clients/ Maltese-speaking clients?
  - a. Do you think that clients who are mainly English-speaking/bilingual express themselves differently to mainly Maltese-speaking clients?
  - b. Have you noticed whether clients switch between languages and what the effect may be?

4. What benefits and constraints do you experience when working in Maltese or English?

- a. Do you find any difficulties when trying to express therapeutic concepts in Maltese? In own therapy/in supervision/with clients?
- b. Do you find any difficulties when trying to use technical jargon with clients?
- c. Can you think of a particular client with whom you worked and with whom you experienced language difficulties?
  - i) What were the particular difficulties?
  - ii) How did they affect the relationship?
  - iii) How did you negotiate them?

5. What are the implications for practice, of training in English and using Anglo-American literature when working in the Maltese context?

- a. Do you find that current literature is always applicable to the Maltese context?

## **Appendix E- Interview Transcript**

### **Interview 3**

**I:** interviewer

**P:** participant

**I:** Ok. So, erm, basically this interview is just about your experiences of bilingualism within the Maltese context and therapy and, er, what your experiences are basically. And I just wanted to start by, erm, asking what your training background is in and?

**P:** Ok, ok. Em, my training is: I have a first degree in psychology and in Malta, emm; they give us a lot of work exposure to humanitarian psychology, existentialism in the first degree. Then I worked in mental health for four years and did another four years in addiction and then when I was working in the addiction setting, I started doing a postgraduate diploma in systemic family therapy and I have just finished my masters in clinical psychology which was quite effective. We were exposed to a variety of schools of thought and a variety of interventions. So that's basically my training and experience.

**I:** So would you say your approach in your theoretical orientation is mixed and integrative or?

**P:** Yeah, yes and no. Sometimes I'm a bit afraid because, I used to give this feedback during the masters course, because to be exposed to so many schools but at the same time, you kind of need more something which you can draw more from. And I can say I feel comfortable in systemic practice because I really like it; you can include the context, you can include how the system affects the individual and vice versa. Emm, existentialism, I think it's really useful because sometimes the basics are not so basic; being there, being non-judgemental, empathy, you know? Ehm, we take it for granted because we have been= it's our bread and butter but,

eh, it's, it's surprising when you have new clients and you ask them what helped you, for example they tell you 'that you were actually listening, that you were actually there, that you were actually not judging me even through your non-verbals so the stance is, is //I: mhm// very existential. Then I find CBT very helpful during parts of sessions particularly //I: mhm// for example if a patient is talking about a relationship problem but then he mentions intrusive thoughts that appear and make him jealous so that part I challenge //I: mhm// and we use the ABC model to challenge that but not the whole session //I: yeah// you know? Ehm, systemic is very helpful not only because of the system but because there are particular methods like for example if you use the narrative approach sometimes you can use the skill of externalising the problem. So if a person is saying that he is depressed or he is anxious, or people at work are really bothering him you can tell them 'So what is the depression doing to you? //I: mmm// that empowers the patient to look at the problem differently and not to feel that he/she is the problem, the problem is the problem. Ehm, also=but there are different skills in the different (inaudible).

**I:** Yeah, so it's almost about adapting //P: yes// according to the client //P: yes, yes, yes// Yeah. And would you say most of the training was done= let's say training and textbooks were mainly in English or?

**P:** Yes, all textbooks and lectures were in English, ehm. First-degree yes //I: mhm// the post-graduate diploma in family therapy most of the lecturers spoke to us in English but some of the lecturers could actually afford to speak to us in Maltese because we were all Maltese. And then the Masters course, most of it was in English but because we were a very small group, sometimes they did switch to Maltese //I: yeah// they, they took our permission and when they saw that it was ok //I: yeah, yeah// they switched to Maltese.

**I:** That's interesting, did, did, did you notice when they would decide to switch or //P: yes// was there a particular reason?

**P:** *Ara* (look) very often they either switched when we had long hours together. For example I remember we had missed some lectures because of the Christmas period and the exam period was coming and so one particular lecturer had provided us with an 8 hour slot straight, with a short break in between, //I: hmm// and I remember that after a couple of hours, I think, I don't know but probably she got tired //I: yeah yeah// of thinking and trying to speak in English and then she asked us and she switched to Maltese. Others did it when we were into the second year, when we were= they really got used to us so I think //I: hmm, hmm// it's also about building a relationship and being more intimate //I: mhm// using your mother language and also when they were struggling to explain //I: ok// Either they couldn't find the exact word; I remember a particular lecture about trauma, a particular lecture about infidelity. They would be looking for the exact word to describe something which is often quite emotional or very sensitive, they can't= they find an English word but it is not exactly exact and they say it in Maltese.

**I:** Wow! That's really interesting. So the emotional expression, they felt it would be more= //P: yes// it would be different in English and Maltese.

**P:** Yes, yes.

**I:** And how about yourself? Do you consider yourself bilingual or Maltese-speaking? English-speaking or?

**P:** Mmm, no I'm mainly Maltese-speaking however I do realise that it is, it is, it is very strange thinking about it eh? Because for example at work we have a colleague, she's a psychiatric nurse and she is British and when she's there, sometimes I switch to English,

sometimes I switch to Maltese //I:hmm, mhm// last time we went altogether to eat, went out to eat, ehm, I realised that the person sitting in front of her, because she was speaking in English to her, as soon as the waiter came, she spoke to him in English //I: yeah, yeah// So it's kind of funny. With friends and with family I speak mostly Maltese, it's like these words which we don't really have in Maltese, but I do find myself that with certain friends and even with certain clients, ehm, I use a lot of English //I: mhm// of English and if you tell me why I think of two particular clients. I think with them I find it easier for them to understand me when I use English //I: hmmm, ok yeah// somehow.

**I:** Do you think that they come from particular backgrounds or maybe they speak in English more? Is that it do you think or?

**P:** No. No neither of them. They speak Maltese at home, they are Maltese, they are Maltese-speaking. Ehm, I don't know it sometimes happened that I couldn't find a Maltese word and I use the English instead. Apparently I think it was reinforced and I kept using it more //I: yeah// and one of them she still answers in Maltese and the other one, he's a male, he answers in English and sometimes he answers in Maltese but he is Maltese speaking.

**I:** Yeah.

**P:** Now I'm thinking about it actually.

**I:** So do you think it, ehm, affects in any way when there's, ehm, English words are introduced? It seems like it makes it easier //P: ehe// it makes the relationship easier.

**P:** Yes. I think it was a = probably it was a gut feeling or it happened even coincidentally that I used some English words. Probably I responded better and I kept on using it //I: aha, ok// And then more interesting I have a client, ehm, she has a borderline personality diagnosis and she has a lot of early traumas, like before age= before age 10, before age 7 //I: Hmm// and

she used to live abroad when she was a child, and, it, actually, the trauma happened, the trauma happened when she was a child //I: hmm// speaking in English, not living in Malta.

I: OK.

P: When she is in the session, especially when she is very confused and I speak to her in English, she is better. Somehow, she goes back to the time when she was not traumatised yet //I: hmm// and she spe= she speaks little but she=she tends to get= borderline they do it, like they don't look at you anymore, she looks down, and I tell her 'look at me' but she looks down and she keeps on ruminating and thinking and right then when she does that and I speak to her in English like '(her name) what are you feeling right now?' she just looks up at me and says 'I'm sad' whilst in Maltese she wouldn't say anything.

I: That's really, really interesting //P: yeah// it's almost like it becomes a therapeutic tool then.

P: Yeah with her yes, very much so.

I: Accessing her emotions.

P: Yes very much so. And even sometimes I use, I use writing with her because she fi= when she is very down she finds it very hard to speak. Like I tell her 'then write to me what you feel, or draw' and very often she writes in English and I find that very interesting because she is not highly educated, she speaks only Maltese, she's been here for like now, 30 years.

I: Ok

P: So

I: yeah, it's interesting. It's almost like the language becomes symbolic of something else.

**P:** Yes, yes.

**I:** And, ehm, you mentioned that you worked in quite a few settings and I was just wondering whether you noticed a difference in the clients, ehm, maybe their backgrounds, or the different settings you've worked in?

**P:** Yes, yes there is a diff= very often there is a difference if they are English- speaking at home and in Malta it's like, ehm, which language you speak is attached to status and social class. Like people coming from higher classes speak=are more English speaking //**I:** hmm// and sometimes people speak in English because they want to associate themselves with that class as well. So yes I have noticed that, that people coming from certain backgrounds are more English speaking than the rest. Ehm, as long as I know the person is genuine and the language they are using is the language //**I:** hmm// they feel best, I ask them how they would prefer that I answer //**I:** mhm// because my first preference is Maltese //**I:** hmm, hmm// and if I know that they understand Maltese perfectly because they are Maltese and just want to answer in English, I try that first but if they either don't understand well or else they feel there is //**I:** mhm// a barrier, then I adjust. But still I feel, it's very, very difficult to do therapy which is not your mother language //**I:** mhm// Ehm, although we learn English I think, from like 3 years old, it still never becomes your mother language. It's very hard, especially therapy, language is an art so to have that mastery of it, to twist it around, to use metaphors, ehm, to connect, everything! Language in itself is an art *issa* (now) in therapy it's even more //**I:** yeah// so not being your mother language I find it very difficult //**I:** mhm// I do it, eh I don't feel comfortable about the pronunciation for example, especially if they are foreign //**I:** mhm// because I would know that it is not their language so probably it would sound funny for them and I would also, like, feel that I am not, I am not going to the= I am not using the correct word exactly, you know?



**I:** Yeah

**P:** That I find a bit difficult.

**I:** So do you think you find it, the difficulty makes it harder to form relationships or the therapeutic relationship, or to empathise or?

**P:** *Ara* (look) with colleagues I can say, even with friends, that when they are English speaking, solely English speaking, eh, it does create a bit of a barrier; with clients, yes and no. I think there are other like soft skills //**I:** hmm// I can use and help the therapeutic relationship, like, *qisu* (it seems) empathy sometimes is beyond words //**I:** yes// it's your non-verbals, it's the way you look at them, it's your non-verbals, it's your posture, it's your everything //**I:** yeah// so that's beyond language. Ehm, but sometimes yes it can be a barrier because perhaps you feel that you're not giving the patient exactly what he is giving you or you're not picking up everything or he might feel that you did not quite pick up this point //**I:** hmm// and then more than language there is the culture so there are Maltese, ok, //**I:** yeah// *issa* (now) within Maltese society there are more subcultures //**I:** yeah// but I'm talking about now cultures that are= for example I remember having a British client when I used to work in addiction and I don't know, sometimes I experience the British people as being more polite, very probably respecting boundaries, very cautious, and when comparing her to other clients I had at first I used to feel that she was either resistant to therapy because she was giving me so very little //**I:** mhm// or else that she was shy, or else that she might have a difficulty to trust; and then through supervision I started realising that it might be an issue related to culture //**I:** mhm// because sometimes us Maltese are much more expressive //**I:** yeah// eh you know? We're more Mediterranean //**I:** yeah, yeah// so, so sometimes it helps to build a relationship even quicker //**I:** yeah, yeah// and so I noticed a difference in the culture. Even in the sense of entitlement //**I:** yeah ok// Sometimes they say Maltese have a strong sense of

entitlement because we have a paternalistic government ; I experience that in free services sometimes but I experience foreigners here as having a stronger sense of entitlement //I: ok that's interesting// I don't know what that's about; perhaps they come from cultures that are more by the book and perhaps they find the systems here a bit too lenient I don't know //I: yeah yeah// but very often, ehm, that also affects the therapeutic context because then //I: I see// they make you feel like you're being tested and you don't have to make mistakes //I: hmm, mhm// because they are used to it being by the book and they comment about everything so //I: yeah// you know?

I: Yeah, yeah. So it's like sometimes language can go beyond the actual words //P: yes// but can be expressive of culture. It's interesting. And I was just sort of wondering whether, you noticed any difference in= I know you touched upon it before when you described your lecturers, whether you noticed any difference in emotional expression when it comes to language? As in whether English words and Maltese words don't always match up in the same emotions?

P: Yes, yes I realise that more whenever I try to translate. There was a one sheet for people who have just experienced trauma, it's like an index questionnaire to get an index of how traumatized the person is, and when it came to emotions even if you find the same= it's not the same //I: hmm// I can't remember *hekk*(like that) offhand, let me think (.) but it's very difficult and when it is something that I want to express myself really deeply I use my mother language //I: yeah// that's what I feel most comfortable about. And if clients are not Maltese and they are not using their mother language to express themselves, I think in understanding I don't have any problem //I: hmm// but then I just wonder when I reflect back what they are saying, do they feel 100% understood? //I: hmm// or do they feel that there is still the barrier? //I: mhm// you know what I mean? //I: mhm//.

**P:** So it's almost like cul= a different cultural background might transform an emotion into= not transform, might provide a different understanding of an emotion?

**I:** It's not the culture, eh, like for example let me say I am having a session with a person who is English-speaking //I: mhm// and he is explaining= expressing himself, and I am going to understand what he means, but if I, when I reflect back like in an empathic way, 'So you're just saying so, so and so' sometimes I wonder, does he feel understood when I translate what he has just said, like in a summarizing fashion //I: mhm// and paraphrasing? Or does he feel that I missed something or= because of the language I used I did not really portray what's= you know? //I: yeah, yeah, yeah// I often wonder about that because therapy is a very intimate thing //I: mhm// and to feel that in something that intimate you cannot be yourself and be understood= sometimes I also think of like when there are intercultural marriages //I: hmm, hmm// If I have an intimate relationship, and you cannot use your mother language, I wonder about that //I: yeah// how that can feel you know?

**I:** Yeah, yeah. So it's almost like there's something limiting, there's a part of that person that cannot come out because it is not being expressed //P: yes// in the language that it was created in.

**P:** Yes, yes.

**I:** That's really interesting.

**P:** And from my own experience, even when I had boyfriends who were foreign or friends, there were some things, ehm, that I couldn't get through //I: mhm// no matter how much I tried// **I:** Yeah// and even if they were really trained in English //I: yeah// it still = and you see them, some of them try to go back to their= actually they go back to their mother language,

they say it, you don't understand it //I: yes// and they tell you what they are trying to say but it's amazing how they need to go back //I: mhm// back to it.

I: Yeah, yeah, and it sounds almost like how, from how you were describing clients before who speak in English, you found a way to negotiate //P: yes// a place where they can feel comfortable and even though you prefer speaking in Maltese, where you can feel comfortable as well.

P: Yes, yes, yes. I think if you are always clear about your communication and what they prefer and give=giving them the space to choose, at the end of the day therapy is there for them //I: Yeah// if I can adjust I do. So I think if you keep talking about it, ehm, and even talking about this, like 'how do you feel, I don't know, that you're English speaking and I'm a Maltese therapist?' //I: mmm// and very often they tell you 'it's not ideal, I wished I had.' Ehm //I: yeah, yeah// and I= when I had supervision, I used to have supervision in Maltese and I used to have supervision in English and I used to feel the limitation when it was in English //I: ok wow// and all my colleagues did.

I: That's really interesting.

P: *Issa* (now) we're all educated //I: yes, yes// we know English very well but still.

I: Yeah, what do you think the limitation that you felt was?

P: Let me think (.) Hmm, some, some things= *ara*, (look) = when we used to = first I had a female foreign supervisor then a male. When they used to ask me, like, "How does the client make you feel?" //I: mhm// and I start telling them, but then when it comes to a point of explaining my feelings towards this client, eh, it's like my countertransference towards this client, and I'd choose very particular adjectives //I: mhm// or emotions, it's there where I used to get stuck and then I either had to stop, think a bit //I: mhm// to start finding words,

telling them, let's say I find three words which are closest, telling them and then like, we'd discuss between us 'is it this is it that? No it's not' you know? //I: hmm, yeah, yeah// and there again it's not always, you're not always there! //I: yeah// and sometimes if I would have been struggling for a long time I would say 'let's leave it at this, this is the most' you know?

I: Yeah, yeah //p: so// so it's almost like an emotional nuance, colour that you cannot //P: yes, yes// and so it's really interesting how before you mentioned that you managed to have an open conversation about 'I'm Maltese speaking you're English speaking, how does that make you feel?' //P: yes, yes// It's=

P: Yes and even when I used to have doubts about culture, I used to like check with them in a way //P: hmm// I used to tell them 'Sometimes I experience you as perhaps, I'm not sure, but perhaps you still have to get used to this setting, perhaps you are not confident enough, is it something in your culture or is it something that perhaps I am experiencing?' you know?

I: Yeah, yeah.

P: Sometimes they are not aware of it themselves, they are not aware if its culture or if it's them //I: yeah// but at least it's like you're keeping it active in the room //I: yeah// so they don't feel it's something they cannot talk about not to offend you //I: yeah// you know? //I: yeah, yeah// Coz sometimes they will feel you know, if they tell you something that is not 100% you might get offended you know?

I: Hmm. So it's almost like you're quite aware about cultural differences it seems. I'm wondering was it always part of your training or experience or?

P: I think, in fact, it is a bit missing about working with different cultures. Yes it is, *jigifieri*, I think what I've learnt was mostly if not all through doing, through work. I had training in culture in family therapy because since culture and context is part of systemic practice, ehm,

they sued to teach us a lot about family cultures and how aware we need to remain open to different cultures. Over there yes, I think they gave us a lot but in the first degree and in the Masters I don't think there was enough about different cultures. I'm not sure I should speak about other cultures rather than English languages?

**P:** If you feel like it's relevant.

**I:** Ok, because last year I had my placement carried out at X hospital //I: ok// and I came across a lot, quite a high percentage of our clients were immigrants and one of the biggest barriers, apart from culture so let's not go there //I: yeah, yeah// was the language. So for example sometimes they sued to send the psychologist and myself to do an assessment //I: mhm// but the person doesn't understand English, then we used to call for a, for a translator //I: mhm// and (.) ok usually the translator was from their culture and knew English. Some of them knew English quite good, some of them so and so but sometimes we'd get confused because sometimes they'd switch to their own= to their native language and then they get back to you. So for example I remember we had a case, where the professionals were suspecting that the translator was the person, was the husband of the pregnant person we were assessing but he was presenting himself as the translator. They didn't come into the room together but they sometimes saw them together //I: yeah// things like this. How would you know, you know? //I: it's true, yes// and having another person in the room it changes the whole context //I: yes, yes// ehm, and even before translating to her he used to tell us 'so is this what you're saying?' and he kept on trying but that's as far as he could go and he says it to her and you really don't know. //I: yeah// And sometime some of them you think they are understanding but then as you see them two times, three times, you start realising that they answer everything in the same way because then you get the different answers 'do you have any mental health problems in the family?' 'No' for example, then two weeks later, she says

‘yes’ and you say ‘who?’ And she says ‘what?’ so you don’t know if you’re getting the right information //I: yes, yes, yes// and that is like, that is a different scenario which is becoming very common and which we’re not trained for //I: yeah, yeah// Not at all.

I: It, it sounds like it’s a (.) difficult situation //P: Yes// to negotiate //P: yes// with a lot of different factors.

P: Yes, yes. Even with violence for example, for some of them they accept it and what if you are supporting that woman, will you accept, you know? //I: yeah// there are all these issues//I: there are a lot of yeah//

I: I’m just sort of thinking, I know you work at psychiatric hospital and maybe even in your past experiences, do you feel like people who have, maybe like diagnostic labels, I’m wondering if like, maybe, diagnostic labels are given in English or?

P: *Mela*, most of them.

I: Yeah.

P: Most of them. I don’t think we have any words in Maltese //I: hmm// I’m thinking for example of OCD //I:hmm// there’s nothing. Depression we have a word, but no one actually uses it.

I: Yes, it’s true.

P: Schizophrenia some use it in Maltese but it’s mostly in English. Bipolar disorder how would you say that in Maltese? So yes diagnostic labels are in English and we use English.

**I:** So I'm just sort of wondering if you feel like, let's say mostly Maltese-speaking people would find problems in let's say even pronouncing them //P: ehh// or understanding what this word is

**P:** Yes, yes. It could be the client himself or herself, that you are actually thinking that you are= very often this comes from the medical model that they actually think they are informing the client but because they use jargon, which first is jargon and then is in English //I: yeah, yeah// they say a lot but they would have said nothing for the patient because they just get lost //I: yeah, yeah// you know? So yes there is that thing as well.

**I:** So it's almost like they have a label which is in many ways a specialised one //P: yes// and in a way they have to deal with. I'm just sort of wondering if maybe in your own work if you've ever had to use technical jargon or technical terms related to theory or something with clients //P: Ok// where there haven't been Maltese equivalents or it's been harder ?

**P:** Aha, aha, there were moments when I used for example, ehm, some concepts from CBT or some theoretical concept, other theoretical concepts. Ehm, I find= I am a very visual person, and very often I find that when I have a paper next to me, if they accept I tell them would you mind if I draw something, if they accept coz some clients, especially addicts hated it when they felt like you are going to teach them //I: hmm// or somehow you know? //I: yeah// so I check with them and then, ehm, if the concept is too hard in English or I can't find a Maltese word I just draw a person, for example a stick figure, then I do an arrow, and then use language but that helps //I: hmm// even with different mental abilities //I: yeah// it helps.

**I:** So you found a way to go beyond.



**P:** Yes // **I:** yeah// yes because if I just use the concepts and I know that they are not getting it I might as well not use it at all, you know? // **I:** yeah// what they need to understand because there are other concepts which we don't need to explain you know? // **I:** yeah, yeah// so.

**I:** It's almost like you've found, ehm, you feel= it sounds like you feel it's your responsibility to make sure your clients are understanding you // **P:** Yes// it seems you take care of that.

**P:** Yes, I feel a strong sense of responsibility that they understand especially if they are coming from a minority, a, a// **I:** yeah// and they have different culture and different language, you have to be careful of that // **I:** yeah// because they could be a minority here in Malta // **I:** yeah// so there could be a lot of drawbacks and I wouldn't want therapy to be just another of them // **I:** mhm// where they feel that they are like ok acknowledged but they are not really understood they are just being there // **I:** yeah, yeah// you know? 30.23

**I:** Do you feel that there is a growing awareness of this amongst=coz it seems, feels like Malta's become multicultural// **I:** yes// quite rapidly, quite recently.

**P:** Yes, yes. Ehm, awareness (.) I think we all know that Malta is becoming quite multicultural, I think we all know it's very cosmopolitan, we all know that we have a lot of immigrants coming here, ehm, but somehow I think we are still a bit reluctant to accept it // **I:** mhm// and perhaps, I don't know, perhaps the reason we don't yet have training for it, could be part of that reluctance, difficulty in accepting that it is really happening // **I:** mmm// It's like we want to hold on to what we have // **I:** mhm// and believe that we are Maltese and Malta is still ours // **I:** hmm// we can use Maltese and this is our culture and perhaps comes out because we are a very small island and we have been ruled so often and for so long by foreigners that now we want to hold on to what's ours // **I:** yeah, yeah// what defines us you know? // **I:** yeah, yeah// so.

**I:** It's interesting. And I'm just sort of curious, ehm, if you've ever found that, I mean, let's say if maybe, during the course of your training, ehm, you've used mostly English literature, American literature, or from different parts of the world, or ?

**P:** No, no. Definitely, definitely, jìgifieri we have nothing from the East, definitely Western. Ehm, I think, I think, mostly , mostly we use, eh, English, English literature and sometimes we do refer to American literature but I think mostly, eh, it is British. But actually it's a good question because I wasn't always= well if you take books I had books being published in America and I had books being published in the UK, journals I accessed both. I think it's more that we follow the UK system and the diagnostic, the way we diagnose //**I:** hmm// and in our systems, I think yes. And sometimes when I read an article about psychology or mental health even before looking where it's coming from, it's like I know probably this is the American approach to psychology, probably this is the British approach to psychology //**I:** yeah, yeah// I don't know what's the difference.

**I:** Do you feel that there are times when it's not so applicable to Malta? Culturally, for cultural reasons there might be for instance //**P:** ok, ok// a difference.

**P:** Ehm, yes, yes, ehm, what's not applicable //**I:** hmm// because I think from each scenario and from everything you can apply something but there are a lot of things which are very particular to our background which I think when we go out to work we're not prepared //**I:** hmm// for example ethics in psychology. There is a lot about confidentiality; we had very little about confidentiality in extra-small communities like Malta //**I:** hmm// how do you do it when you start working //**I:** yeah// it's such a face to face community that it's very, very hard. Ehm, what else? The strong impact of religion and of, of social pressure, how much do you get that from a UK book and a= you get something but it's a totally different reality //**I:** yeah// Ehm, values //**I:** yeah// something which we encounter all the time in therapy they are

very particular to our culture, our country so yes there are things which I think we need more specific input about our culture //I: mhm// even the way hospitals are run, services are run, are very specific to how we are //I: yeah// so yes.

I: And I'm just sort of curious, since you trained here in Malta and I'm assuming most of your lecturers were Maltese or raised here //P: yes// did they sort of include the Maltese aspect in lectures?

P: Yes in an informal way, through giving examples, for example I think, I think I rarely had a handout for example or have been suggested a book //I: yeah// ehm, never or rarely, ehm so they do it through an informal way through example giving from their own workplace or from their own experience, eh very informally though //I: hmm// so.

I: So it's almost like there's not formalized, let's put it that way //P: no// input from the local aspect //P: no, I was very happy// through papers.

P: That when I was doing my thesis which was about families, I was lucky because there is a particular researcher in Malta, I can name her, she is Professor X and she publishes a lot of papers about families within the Maltese context, so I= during my literature review I could see what. What the literature in the rest of the Western world is saying and see what the literature here is saying, still it was very limited //I: mhm// you know because like, eh, for example I had 6 paper, papers from her, another 2 papers from a priest who also publishes about the family, and a book and eh a paper from a sociologist. So I tried to get= but still compared to what you find abroad it's still very limited but it was very interesting because ehm some of the trends were exactly on the same track of what I founds, just a little behind. If in the 90s the literature was showing something, now we are showing these things because divorce has just been introduced because of the topic. And then there were things which were

totally different so it's good to have *kieku* //I: yeah// it would be good to have something to compare to even statistics //I: mhm// When we say depression, it's what the world outside is saying, we don't know in Malta //I: yeah// when we say schizophrenia, it's also based on research abroad //I: yeah// so.

I: So it seems that it would be helpful to have a more locally-informed source of information?

P: Yes.

I: Yeah. I'm also just curious as in, I was just wondering if, ehm, since maybe most of the training was done in English if whether your thought process when I don't know maybe processing therapy after a session, do you feel like it's done in English or done in both?

P: I think actually it's very interesting, I think it's done in both and I realise that when I go to supervision because I start in Maltese then I go, I, I, I= there are moment where I borrow some words from English because I feel that they really capture what I want to say better then I go back to Maltese, then I go back to English so I think processing is actually done as you said because the training was done in English //I: hmm, hmm// so for example if I say “*mela l-istance tiegħi ma' dal-klijent tkun*”, ‘Stance’ I don't know, we don't have a word //I: yeah, yeah// ehm *jew inkella ngħid dil-client veru hekk, inħossha engulfing*” how would you say that in Maltese? //I: yeah// so there are words //I: hmm// which I can't find in Maltese //I: yeah// you know? Ego *inħoss li l-ego vera inflated per eżempju*” ‘inflated’ *ngħid*. Ehm so.

I: Yeah so it's interesting it's almost like in some ways as a practitioner it's really important to be bilingual or to have a good understanding of both //P: yes yes// or it can be limiting otherwise.

P: Yes but then it was strange, when it came to writing, I used to feel very= I don't know why, especially during my masters course because the work was more refined //I: mhm// I

used to find language a very big barrier //I: hmm// even though I used to get good marks and everything but as I was writing I always remember myself saying ‘Oh how I wish I could write this in Maltese. Oh how I wish //I: yeah yeah// Because there was a strong emotional component //I: yeah, yeah// especially because the course was a bout self-reflexive practice so you have to speak a lot about //I: hmm// yourself and when referring to the like, to the momentum of therapy and like when describing a case study or add a history of the patient, I often used to feel compelled to like go to my mother language //I: hmm// Then again when I used to write the technical words, if I write in Maltese //I: hmm// how will I put these technical words in Maltese? //I: yeah yeah// you know? //I: yeah// so it’s like a double-bind you can never win you know? //I: yeah, yeah, yeah// but I really wish that we had been given the opportunity to hand in our work in both languages and then you choose //I: hmm// you know?

**I:** So it was, was it just sort of you could only do it in English then?

**P:** Actually to be honest I never asked //I: yeah// but I never asked because I used to think that if I asked that they would perceive me as something less that I’m asking as I don’t really have a good mastery of English //I: hmm// so I never asked //I: yeah// because everybody was handing in everything in English so I said I just have to comply //I: yeah// they could have awarded me the opportunity //I: yeah// I don’t know but we had external examiners as well so I don’t think I would have been allowed to do so in everything. For example the portfolios, thesis, big assignments had to be in English for sure //I: ah ok// because of the external examiner.

**I:** So the external examiners were from //P:the up// the up?

**P:** Yes.

**I:** So it's almost like in some ways you had to adapt to them.

**P:** Yes, yes.

**I:** And in adapting it's almost like you, you had a mis= something missing in your ability to

//**P:** yes yes// to satis= to express yourself in a way that satisfied you.

**P:** Yes, yes. Ehe, I used to feel that a lot, a lot, extremely!

**I:** Yes. It must have been very frustrating.

**P:** Very frustrating! Coz you know you could express yourself better, you know you could give in an even better job and give in a much more detailed description, story but then you're limited //**I:** yeah// you know? So.

**I:** Ok I just want to see if (.) It feels like, I think we've covered //**P:** ok// quite a lot of what I wanted to ask //**P:** ok// so thank you very much.

**P:** You're welcome.

[Participant wished to say something else once interview had ended so interview resumed]

**P:** Ok so I just wanted to add something about the fact that I am Gozitan, which is the sister island of Malta, and it's the same language but it's a very different dialect. So I notice myself, when working with Gozitan clients, but not always let me expla= when working with Gozitan clients I use the Gozitan dialect //**I:** mhm// but then it depends. If I know that they are very informal people, and they hate formality and it will make them feel that the therapist is very far away and speaking a different lan= I even more make an extra effort to use the local dialect //**I:** mhm// Eh if on the other hand I know that they are the kind of people that need boundaries, who need to know that the professional is there and knows what she is doing,

then it's very interesting because I use the proper dialect //I: wow ok// I use Maltese //I: yeah, yeah//. Then with the Maltese people I always use Maltese *but* I did find myself, with clients from particular villages who have particular dialects sometimes going, ehm, sometimes even consciously, ehm, twisting a bit with the words //I: hmm// to adjust to the client to use his language literally so they feel more understood //I: mhm// and it's amazing sometimes it works. //I: hmm yeah// and I saw it working at the clinic where I used to work because the team leader is from the same village as most of the clients and she uses their same dialect //I: hmm// they connect. It's like 'she's one of us //I: wow yeah// and she understands, we don't need to explain much.' You know? //I: yeah yeah// 'we're on the same wavelength'' so yes, even dialect, it's true.

**I:** So it sounds like it strengthens empathy and the ability to work.

**P:** Yes. Like advanced empathy, beyond words. You know?

**I:** It's very interesting.

**P:** And then I'm thinking about the times when I switch to the Gozitan dialect without wanting, and I think those were moments where I wanted to use the Maltese dialect and I would be using it very well, but then there comes a point when I am either tired //I: mhm// or else I'm struggling to explain something or, or to connect and then I realise that I use a Gozitan //I: wow// word and it's very funny in a way, it's very interesting in some other way. //I: yeah// so yes, I have switched to Gozitan during moments when I really didn't want to //I: yeah wow // yes it happens //I: interesting// coz actually that is my mother language //I: yeah, yeah, yeah// with the dialect, you know?

**I:** And how do you feel the Gozitan dialect is perceived generally by people who don't speak it?

**P:** I feel, it's my perceptions, ehm, that it's perceived, it's looked down upon //**I:** hmm// they either say that they won't understand us or else they can make fun of us //**I:** hmm//. Actually, I think I have been, I have been taught these ideas because whenever I studied in Malta and worked in Malta we always had Maltese colleagues and friends asking me 'Please speak in Gozitan because I really like it listening to the dialect' //**I:** yeah// and I rarely accepted. So I have never been made fun of //**I:** mhm// because I spoke the Gozitan dialect, I think it's a preconceived idea. But I have heard people talking about other people for example of the television if they interview Gozitan people and they use the Gozitan dialect, I have heard Maltese people like making fun of them //**I:** yeah// you know? So I think that's where I got the information from.

**I:** So it's almost like it's a rougher //**P:** yes yes// in fact sometimes I noticed that in my interactions with people from Gozo, since I'm not from there myself and I speak in Maltese to them they won't sue dialect even if I am in Gozo, it's automatically Maltese.

**P:** Yes, yes and it's funny even if you're in the same room, for example I'm in this room and I am with a Gozitan and we will be speaking the dialect and you come in, I automatically switch to Maltese with you, and then if needs be I speak in Gozitan to her //**I:** wow yeah// and it happens, it has happened. We have learned to do it I think naturally, not naturally, we are not born with it but we have been adapted to it you know?

**I:** So it's almost like the languages can signify different relationships.

**P:** Yes and then there is a particular Gozitan psychiatrist and I love it when he does it, ehm, when he sees me he speaks to me in pure Gozitan //**I:** yeah// it's like a message that you know? Not 'I'm on your side' but it's like 'we're one' //**I:** hmm, hmm// we're coming from and like were together in this'. It's very strong. Even if you're abroad and you hear your



language the way you react is so interesting //I: it's true, it's true// 'aw, there are Maltese people around?' For me it's joy //I: yeah yeah// that = language is very strong; it's what connects us, it's what defines us you know? So.

I: Yeah, it's a strong emotional link.

P: Yes, yes, yes. It defines a lot of emotions, a lot of relationships. That's why I like to adapt, the dialect and the language to what the client is speaking //I: hmm hmm// because I think it helps them become more comfortable, feel more understood and there is an understood connection //I: hmm// In fact I think once there was a French philosopher, he is an author, he used to= Lepleusiot he was called= he used to say in reality we don't need the language because we connect in so many ways //I: hmm, mhm// which we don't use language, which you know? //I: yeah yeah// which is what I told you about when you told me 'How do you compromise? Do you think it affects the therapeutic relationship?' I told you 'yes and no' //I: yes, yes// because then you find other ways of communicating and going beyond that. And something which really amazes me is *hekk*, how children connect. I *hekk*, sometimes I observe my nephews and nieces when I take them to play areas, and if you go to MacDonald's in Bugibba, there are a lot of cultures there, and the younger they are, the less language is a problem //I: wow// because they connect through play; they do gestures and then they pass over one another, they go on the slide //I: mhm// the, *qisu* the more they grow the more they need language apparently and the more language becomes a barrier because then we socialise them to connecting through words you know? Actually you can connect through many different ways //I: yeah// so. Even when I ask clients what helped you or what helps you, very often they refer to the non-verbals //I: hmm// both in a good and in a bad way. Sometimes they told me, your non-verbals about for example empathy really helped because I could see from the look in your eyes, from the way you were sitting, from eh way

you were looking at me that you were really understanding, but there was a particular client who had told me= I was still at the very beginning of my career, he had told me ‘something which didn’t help me was that’= he was a drug addict, he told me ‘something which didn’t help me through the process was that when sometimes I used to tell you things when I got into mischief, although you tried to remain neutral, your non-verbals showed.’ (*Laughs*) so you know?

**I:** Yes.

**P:** There is more to it. And ehe and I think clients pick that up as well. Sometimes even more than language.

**I:** Yes, yes.

**P:** So it’s the argument, it’s the other argument now you know? ‘//I: yes// Language is very strong but then we have other things we can use to connect with other clients so.

**I:** Finding the other way. Thank you.

**P:** You’re welcome.

## **Appendix F- an example of the initial data analysis identifying constructions of Maltese Vocabulary as unrefined**

“I think Maltese is very limited when it comes to emotional words. In fact what I notice is that we either over-generalise the use of a particular word, like for example, everyone is depressed or everyone is angry but mostly depressed or getting mad or getting crazy. In English we have more variety and even to express ourselves for example of we have to make the distinction between anger and rage, in Maltese I think we do lack a word for rage. Whenever I have to explain this word in Maltese I would say something like “rabja li ma tarax art” or “rabja li tintilef” {laugh} it’s not actually a word!” (Lisa)

**Comments:** Maltese is being constructed as poorer and limited whilst English is constructed as richer and more varied. The implication that Maltese is able to express nuances of emotions through metaphor is constructed as limited due to the fact that these varying shades of a single emotion are not expressed in one-word form. Unwittingly Lisa positions herself as subscribing to the discourse of Maltese as psychologically limited.

“Ehm when it comes to the conceptual framework it is more, from the academic aspect, when it comes to emotions English is more refined /I:hm/ we take English words into the Maltese language so actually we use at times Englishisms, to ehm, get into explaining ourselves but sometimes yes, I think it’s difficult but then it depends on the population /I:mhm/ For instance at X and even a little bit at X, you could have clients who, their emotions are very basic /I: mhm/ so ehm you know the four basic emotions: happiness, fear, anger and at the moment I forgot the other one so it is more= it’s not refined, it’s very raw. So the Maltese is funny in that, but when it comes to= you might have clients who need to explain exact emotions or exact thoughts at times in Maltese, either you need to use a phrase, ehm instead of a word that you use in English or else we sort of use an English word /I:hm/ which you

would understand or else we would use the English word you see the client did not understand /I:hm/ so we need to be sensible to that /I:yeah/ So a little bit, this is a little bit my experience which I think makes a difference between Maltese and English and some people actually find it ehm= in fact in Maltese they continue to= we continue to use the usual raw words, the basic words /I:mhm/ but actually within different=differently/I:hm ok/ that is maybe in English somebody will be eh to show big anger might use a different word than just anger /I:mhm/ or an expression whilst in Maltese we still use ‘rabja’ meaning rage /I: yeah/ ok so? Or they use an expression so Maltese yes it’s a little bit different.” (Daniel)

**Comments:** Daniel also draws from the discourse of Maltese emotional language as being limited with clients using these words also being constructed as conceptually limited. Daniel draws from the dominant discourse of Maltese as being limited and basic with the result that therapy in Maltese is a constraint. Oppositional construction. “Englishisms”- reflecting idea that words assimilated into Maltese cannot be considered Maltese thereby subscribing to discourse surrounding mixing of languages as deviant.

“I find Maltese a bit rougher, I don’t know, like, it’s my impression, whereas ehm, English it’s kind of more ethical, it’s more polite somehow.” (Carla)

**Comments:** Carla is constructing Maltese as crude and perhaps more vulgar in contrast to the construction of English as a more respectable language. The effect of this construction is that Carla unintentionally denigrates Maltese (inappropriate for therapy?) and possible clients who prefer to speak in Maltese.

“Well, when speaking about sexuality for example /I: ah ok/ that was= yes aha, sexuality is something that I find difficult ,ehm, even for them because in Maltese there are terms that are

more, you know, formal but we don't use them that much and the common language sometimes isn't that= it's kind of raw, crude."

**Comments:** Sexual vocabulary in Maltese is constructed as vulgar.

"If a person is extremely depressed I say obviously ehm you're feeling depressed. **Pero I think the range of feeling words is bigger in English than it is in Maltese.** Ehm, in Maltese it's *imdejjaq, imdejjaq hafna imdejjaq ftit* (sad, very sad, not so sad) in getting the intensity of the word of the feeling, there aren't enough words that are expressive of the intensity. In English you have down, sad, depressed /I: yes/ *ma nafx* (I don't know) devastated or desolate or= but in Maltese you have the core feeling word and then you have you know? A little down or a lot down or depressed or not depressed."

**Comments:** Maltese is constructed as limited when describing emotions.

"Because then the foul language in English, **the foul language in Maltese is more aggressive than it is in English** /I: hmm, yeah/ so that's {inaudible} using foul language in English but it sounds more= Maltese is if, if, you know I can use the f-word right? If I may eh {laughs} /I: yes/ Ehm you'd say fuck off you know like in Maltese its **very** depicted, it's like saying which part of your sexual organ you're putting into its more sort of aggressive in that way."

**Comments:** Maltese is constructed as being more aggressive, more vulgar. The implication is that Dominic is almost positioning himself as disdainful of this. Would a client who used such language be depicted as more rough and crude?

"If it's just describing events you know I wouldn't use that language /I: hmm, hmm/ or in certain situations when someone is using very f= you know that something of a sexual problem, ehm ,then they use very, very vulgar way *speci* (sort of) there will be an educational

process to you know, they don't know what sexual parts for instance /I: hmm, hmm/ and some words in Maltese are a bit more, the connotation is a bit more, ehm, foul you know."

**Comments:** Dominic positions himself as needing to educate Maltese clients who use Maltese sexual terms as these are constructed as offensive. The implication of this is that the Maltese sexual narrative may be negated and seen as lower than ones described in English. There is also a sense that clients must be rendered docile by using polite words.

### **Vocabulary: Professionally limiting**

"When you're testing someone and people are referred for IQ testing they are obviously you know, most of the time they're referred because there may be low IQ that you know= state services from my experiences test= the people that were referred to me so you know they wouldn't be comfortable in English and there were aha certain words and vocabulary that were you know I would tell them, I would explain "These are all written in English but I'm going to use Maltese with you" /I: hm/ as much as possible and in certain instances where the translated word in Maltese wouldn't be exactly the same, I would say 'Ok this one I'm going to say it in Maltese first but I'll tell you what it is in English, it's this in English' " (Vanessa)

**Comments:** Vanessa describes her experience of clients working within a state service and their usual lack of English knowledge. She positions herself as an ethical practitioner aware of the power imbalance of using psychometric tests in English with clients who are mostly Maltese-speaking. Raises issues of cross-cultural applicability- is simply translating words enough?

"We have forgotten the wide-range of Maltese expressions /I: hm/ which could kind of reflect our thinking. As you were telling me, if we process in English then we probably got to forget what Maltese really has to offer regarding what is really going on in our thoughts but the

situation is like that at the moment so it's not like /I:yeah/ I can go back to the dictionary and try to.” (Anna)

**Comments:** Anna offers an alternative understanding of professional experiences of Maltese as limited. Anna positions herself as unquestioning of the academic use of English even though she experiences this as potentially limiting at times. A sense of acceptance of status quo.

### **Training**

“Yes, all textbooks and lectures were in English, ehm. First-degree yes //I: mhm// the post-graduate diploma in family therapy most of the lecturers spoke to us in English but some of the lecturers could actually afford to speak to us in Maltese because we were all Maltese. And then the Masters course, most of it was in English but because we were a very small group, sometimes they did switch to Maltese //I: yeah// they, they took our permission and when they saw that it was ok //I: yeah, yeah// they switched to Maltese.” (Sandra)

**Comments:** Sandra uses the word “permission” in talking about the use of Maltese during her training to become a clinical psychologist. The effect of this talk is that the usage of Maltese in lectures is constructed as prohibited from the academic sphere only entering when an appeal to the contrary is sought (links with self-discipline and Foucault). The implication of this construct is that Maltese may be experienced as a sort of “lingua non franca” within the psychological, academic world thus shutting down the development of Maltese technical terms and it's usage by lecturers/students in expressing themselves.

“I feel more comfortable speaking in Maltese in /I: mhm/ general so I think I would be scared that I'll make a mistake then I would be judged badly /I: mhm/ for it. That was more in the

beginning, **now to be honest** if I know my supervisor can understand me in Maltese perfectly well, **I have no problem saying what I want to say in Maltese.**" (Lisa)

**Comments:** Lisa draws on the discourse that English is the academic language. The implication of how English has been positioned for Lisa is that she feels she needs to speak English perfectly; mistakes made may be perceived as a "lack" in her as a professional.

### **Links with social class**

"I think coming in aha, the people who would have maybe, I don't know, **maybe it sounds bad to say but kind of that tend to come from a lower socioeconomic status would be more likely to speak in Maltese** although I've had some people who are pretty high-class speaking in Maltese as well. With the younger generations it's mixed /I: hm/ so I don't feel that distinction especially with the children /I: ah ok/ there isn't that distinction. I think it's more children who come from= go to private schools would speak English u jbatu naqra= sorry! And they, that's interesting that I spoke in a different language, ehm, they find it a bit difficult to speak in Maltese but I notice that with schools /I: hm/ But with grown- ups for example, it's changing but aha qisu **people who come from lower socioeconomic status are more likely to speak in Maltese than in English and people who are high up in business or things like that are more likely to speak in English.**" (Caroline)

**Comments:** Caroline draws on the discourse that language is linked to socioeconomic status. Note self-discipline in action- she corrects herself when switching to Maltese even though it was highlighted that they could switch. She also points out that it is interesting.

"because you know I think bilingualism is very attached to culture /I: yeah/ different subcultures in Malta /I: yeah/ and ehm, there used to be instances where **people who are, have the tendency to speak more in English because of their subculture, maybe mix with others**



who don't understand /I: yeah/ and feel inferior you know, like face to face with people who use English. We use a lot of labels here like *pepe* (slang for posh) /I: yeah {laughs}/ *taf int jew tas*-South (you know? Or from the South) and these issues would come up.” (Vanessa)

**Comments:** In this talk Vanessa associates majority Maltese speakers experiencing a sense of inferiority when confronted with English- speaking people. This replicates the discourse of language as associated with social class.